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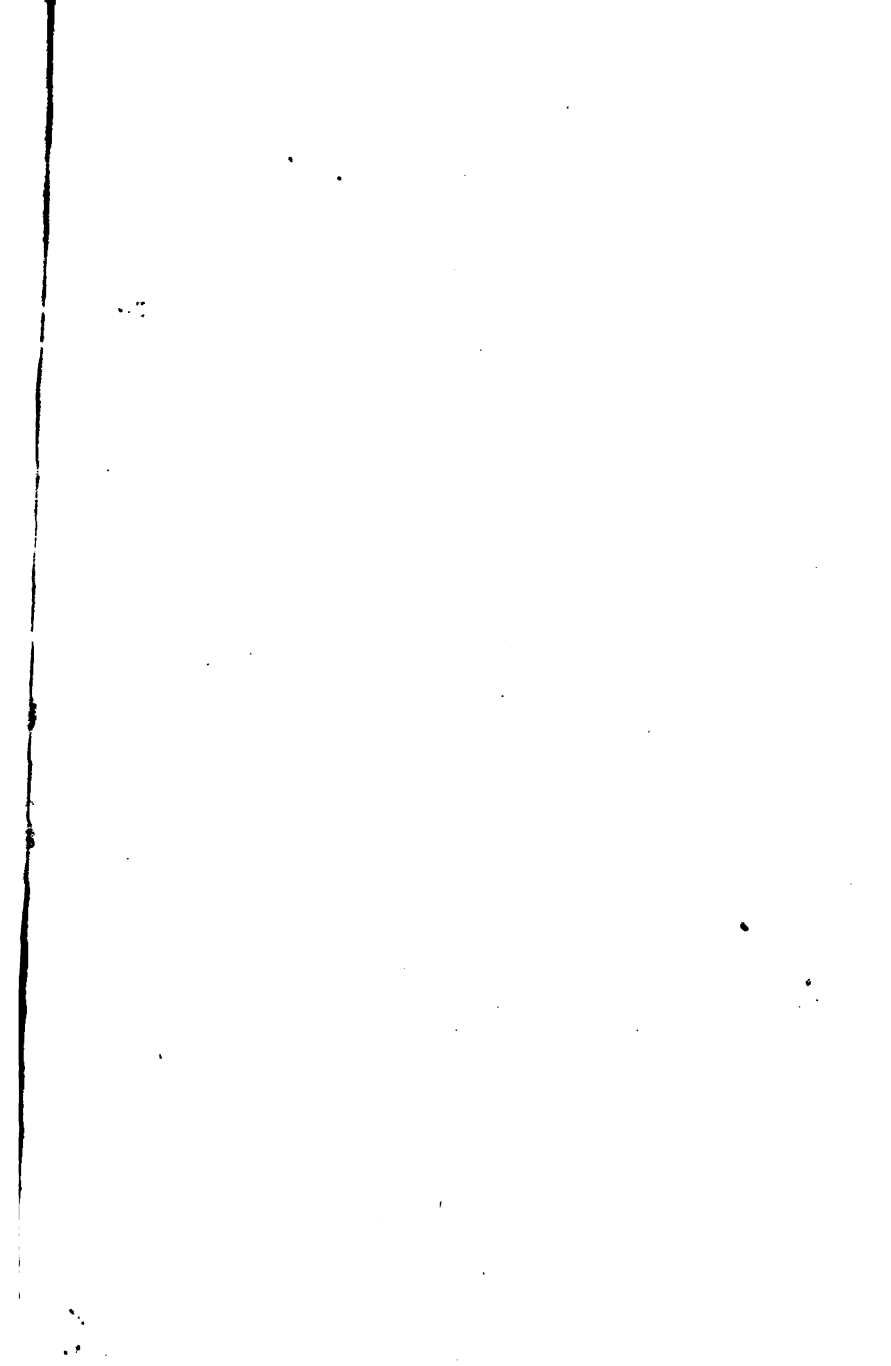
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CROWN COURT, COVENT GARDEN; AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT TRIBULATION," ETC.

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["When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."]—*Luke* xxi. 28.



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DEDICATION.

To the Most Hon. the Marchioness of Stafford.

DEAR MARCHIONESS OF STAFFORD,

I feel it no common pleasure to be allowed to dedicate this work to your Ladyship.

You were one of the first to express to me the deep interest awakened in your mind by a perusal of "The Great Tribulation." I was encouraged by your enlightened and discriminating observations on a subject by no means new to you.

You heard the greater part of this volume in the form of lectures from the pulpit; and you were good enough to tell me, with profit and pleasure.

I have also often conversed with your Ladyship on these glorious themes, and never without advantage from the remarks of a thoughtful mind.

Permit me, therefore, to inscribe the work to your Ladyship as, a humble expression of respect and esteem, as well as of thanks, for your munificent aid, and still more unwearied personal attention to your numerous schools, for the education of the children of the poor.

In this way only can I recognize what my congregation most truly appreciates.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Marchioness of Stafford,

Your Ladyship's faithful Servant,

JOHN CUMMING.

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P R E F A C E.

To the student of prophecy, the annals of the day and the hour rushing past are full of interest. He hears in the events of the present the echoes of ancient prophecies. He sees the inspired word translating itself into facts. To his mind, great statesmen and soldiers are not the sculptors, but the chisels only in the hands of the Divine Sculptor; and the policy of cabinet, and congress, and divan is merely the filling up of the grand programme laid down nearly two thousand years ago. God is in prophecy its inspiration; God is in history its actor.

Standing where prophecy is rushing into history, let us carefully and calmly observe its currents, and gather and garner in our hearts hopes, and joys, and bright expectancies that sparkle on the waters and in the sweet sunshine. Fanaticism, and passion, and prejudice, must have no place in such researches. Dogmatism is no less unchristian. Good men differ on the details of many of the great themes which constitute the burden of the prophetic records. On these it becomes us to speak in temperate language, and with the utmost reserve. But

on the leading truths, and their application, there prevails on all sides great unanimity of judgment; a unanimity that increases every day. The writer does not pretend to any originality: he is content to follow, not to lead. Such men as Bishops Horsley and Newton, Sir Isaac Newton, Mede, Dr. Chalmers, Bickersteth, and Faber, among those who have gone up higher; Bishops Villiers and Bickersteth, Edward B. Elliot, McNeile, Dallas, Freemantle, Keith, Bonar, Chamberlain among living divines; Lord Carlisle, and the Author of "Armageddon," and others, have all written with more or less power and originality, and with marvellous agreement, on the subject of prophecy.

The learned commentators, Stier, Oldshausen, and Dean Alford, take substantially the same views, and unfold them in their works with great erudition. The writer of this volume merely attempts to illustrate and to turn so widely acknowledged truths to practical and personal improvement, he trusts, with all sobriety of judgment and plainness of speech.

He regrets that a few—and a few only—of the literary and learned writers who animadverted on his former book gave so much space to the interpretation of the author's motives and merits, and so little to a discussion of the subject. He can say from the very heart, that it is his master-aim to do good—to make man wiser, and better, and happier, by drawing into the weary present a little of that sunshine which is

stored up for us in the blessed future. His labours may fail—this he cannot help—but the consolation that flows from a pure motive and a sublime object will remain in his heart as a “well of living water,” ever fresh and full. He does not pretend to impart any new light to the scholar; but he labours to teach, and he prays that he may be useful to the many.

“It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight
Once in a century;
But better far it is to speak
One simple word which now and then
Shall waken a new nature in the weak
And sinful sons of men.”



INTRODUCTION.

THINGS THAT BEGIN TO COME TO PASS.

THE EAST.

To whatever point of the compass we turn our eyes we see the signs of approaching change. Let us look toward the sunrise. The Russo-Turkish war has ceased to agitate the nations as a sanguinary conflict in which the vanquished and the vanquishers equally suffered. But its influences on the East are on the increase. The Turco-Moslem hold of Palestine is relaxed, alike by its decay and its crimes. The Euphratean flood has lessened in depth, and emerging from its waters into the light of European interest and into the sunshine of its brilliant future may now be seen the "Holy Land" and the City of the Great King. The far-seeing traders of Europe are looking toward Palestine as likely to recover more than its long-lost commercial importance the instant that the shadow of the sick man fades from its acres. The waters of the Great Sea and the Red Sea are beaten white by lines of steamers, placing Palestine in direct and extended connexion with Europe and the "isles of the Gentiles." Railways are projected between Jaffa, the Persian Gulf, and Egypt. The waters of the Red Sea it is proposed to let into the depressed

basin of Arabia. Jerusalem is, or is to be, a central station for the electric telegraph. That illustrious capital, which has radiated and left everlasting impressions on the whole earth—which has attracted to itself crusader and pilgrim, Christian and Moslem and Rabbi—daily looms, even through its troubles, into greater importance in the minds of congress, cabinet, and divan.

A fact of far greater significance than politicians recognize has lately taken place. The Sultan has presented the church of the Nativity and the Holy Sepulchre, and the site of the palace of the Knights of St. John, to Napoleon, who seems thus, in the words of Daniel, to “plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.” A recent traveller in Palestine remarks:—A very few years ago, no Frank, Jew, or Christian, was permitted to depose in a Mohammedan court of justice; he was not permitted to build a house of worship, nor could he own a foot of land. But now he can testify on a perfect equality with the faithful; he is permitted to build houses of any kind without let or hindrance; he can not only own land in fee-simple, but sit securely under his own vine and fig-tree. Not only are foreigners permitted to own property, but by a late firman they are actually invited to come to Palestine, or any other portion of the Ottoman empire, and occupy as much land as they may desire, paying nothing for twelve years, and subsequently only one-fifth, receiving at the expiration of twenty-one years a complete title.”

It is instructive to notice how rapidly in recent years Jerusalem has grown in importance. Till recently Jerusalem was merely a part of the pashalic of Damascus. It is now a distinct and separate pashalic. In

1843, for the first time in her history, regular consulates were established at Jerusalem. The influence of these is great, and their censure is still feared. They are, in fact, petty kings within the limits and among the population assigned to them. Indeed, the prediction that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down," as far as this relates to the Moslem, notwithstanding recent atrocities, is ceasing to be true.

Dr. Durbin, of the United States, in speaking of the English Protestant mission at Jerusalem, observes, "The prospective political bearing of the Hebrew diocese is perhaps a matter of much greater interest than its immediate religious results. It is doubtless intimately connected with the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine, chiefly under the auspices of England and Prussia. That the measure is considered by the five great powers as having an important political bearing is evident from the fact that, since the organization of the diocese, France, Russia, and Austria have sent their consuls to Jerusalem, where there is neither trade nor commerce to be encouraged or protected. The man may now be living who will see Jerusalem divide with Constantinople the discussions of the representatives of the nations for the settlement of the Eastern question. Its solution involves the fall of Turkey, the extinction of Mohammedanism, the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth, and the triumph of Christianity." The fall of the Turkish empire will be the signal either for its partitionment or for its occupation by one of the great powers. Should the latter take place, the balance of power in Europe is destroyed, and India and the East will be at the feet of the occupant.

Russia has under her at least 350,000 Greek Chris-

tians in Syria. France, as the Representative of Rome, has 260,000. England and Prussia seek to create a population no less attached to us by religion than by the recollection and experience of good received. The "eagles" seem now gathered together in Jerusalem. Perhaps the arrangement will be, Moldavia and Wallachia, and some think Constantinople, to Russia; Egypt to France; and, more glorious than all, Palestine at least friendly to England. Dim shadows of such probabilities are traced out by prophetic students of the sacred page. If so arranged, it will be the signal for the last grand exodus of the Jews from all lands, and their return to Palestine. "The time to favour Zion, yea the set time is come, for her people take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."

So much being contingent in relation both to Europe and Palestine on the downfall of the Turco-Moslem power in Europe, it is important to watch the multiplying symptoms of a decay we cannot arrest. A London daily paper thus accurately describes its present state :—

"The splendid empire which was bequeathed to the descendants of Mahomet and Omar is fast breaking into ruins. For nearly thirteen hundred years the sceptre of these Oriental chieftains waved over realms of colossal magnitude, of unparalleled magnificence, of brilliant intellectual prestige. From the desolate borders of the Amoor to the traditionary Pillars of Hercules the Crescent had been carried; and the worshippers of the Sun, of Fire, and of Vishnu, had been compelled to do homage to the priest who proclaimed, from mosque and minaret, 'There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet.' From the Indus to the Nile—now even to the Niger, and far beyond—the Koran had become the volume of faith to millions, and for a time it was apprehended the Cross itself would become absorbed

into the beams of this rising religion. Happily, the sensual and egotistic principles which served for a time to kindle the enthusiasm of the fanatic followers of the Prophet of Mecca began to wane; it was cheering, no doubt, to believe that whoever fell fighting in the Moslem cause rose to heaven on the wings of applauding angels; it was pleasant to know that in the haven of rest to which the most faithful aspired, there would be Houris and Peris to fan the cheek of the weary warrior, and to comfort them as only the Abigails of the East know how to comfort and refresh the fatigued limbs of their masters; but, by degrees, it grew to be imagined that Paradise might be gained without so much trouble; that if Houris and Peris waited on regenerated mortals above, it must be in the course of fate, inherent in the decrees of Providence; and that, whether fighting or dying, the bliss of the bowers depicted in the holy writings of the Sheiks, would be the prize of those who punctually chanted the formula of Mahomet. Hence the power of the Mohammedan emblem declined, the name of the Giaour became tolerated, and the green standard of the Inspired Chief mingled with the simple emblem of the pure teachings and doctrines of the Prophet of Nazareth.

"It is unnecessary to run over the history of Turkey to remind our readers how rapidly the power of the Crescent has been declining in the East. The revolt of Mohammed Ali, and the severance of Greece, were severe blows, from which it has struggled ineffectually to recover. England and France, for a time, sought to establish the Sultan on his throne; not, however, from religious but political motives; and Russia was checked in her ambitious aims on the possessions of the 'sick man.' But still it must be confessed, that however loyally and devotedly we fought for the Turkish cause on the shores of the Black Sea, the very effort served to rend the empire in twain, and to make the Government less consistent and consolidated than ever. This, we knew beforehand, must be the result of Western interference in the internal affairs of the Porte; but no

alternative was left us. It was a question of occupation by Russia, and loss of British influence in the Levant, or the repulsion of St. Petersburg designs, and the strengthening the independent elements in the dominions of Abdul Mejid. As a free, and liberal, and Christian nation, we could not but insist upon a greater amount of toleration being extended towards our brethren of the Greek Church. We pointed out to the Councillors of the Sultan the necessity of considering the numbers and the position of the oppressed Rayahs, and called for extensive reforms. Those reforms, it will be remembered, were decreed in the celebrated Hatti Houmayoun; and it was believed that every Christian congregation throughout the Turkish empire, at least in Europe, would henceforward breathe more freely. We have no doubt the Sultan wished that such might be the case. He had already been influenced so far by Western ideas as to abandon the costume of his ancestors, the most appropriate to the climate, for the fashion of Poole or some Parisian tailor, and he appeared amongst his subjects in the dress of the Boulevard rather than that of his own country and kindred. The change was preposterous. What was wanted was not a different cut in his surtouts and nether garments, but a radical transformation of the financial department and the department of public worship, if there be one at Constantinople. It was easy, however, to be imagined that such a revolution could not be effected without invoking the anger of the Doctors of the Inquisition, the Pundits of the Sacred Law, the guardians of the ancient Koran. We may readily picture to ourselves that, however earnestly the wise men of Istamboul might recognise the propriety of the decrees issued in the Hatti Houmayoun of the Sultan respecting his Christian subjects, there would be a strong opposition in the provinces and the remote corners of his kingdom—for, beyond the capital, ignorance and prejudice thrive like rank weeds, and bear a rich harvest of poisonous fruits. It is also an observation, founded on experience, that no persecutors are more zealous than converts. Hence, we presume, it is that

the Albanians, who most recently forsook the Christian faith to join the standard of the Crescent, having conspired against the life of the Sultan for conferring on his Greek subjects a few defensive privileges to protect them against the brutal fanaticism of their beys, pashas, and governors, who exercise a petty and merciless tyranny in the provinces over which they have been placed by the corrupt influence of gold.

“Tidings recently reached us that a plot had been discovered to assassinate Abdul Medjid; that two hundred persons, including Djafer Dem, Pasha of Albania, had been arrested; and that some troops are suspected of having been cognizant of, and of having favoured the attempt. What is this but an indication of the utter inapplicability of the Moslem mind to the progress of the present generation? The law that binds his conscience, and, with his conscience his intellect, is adamant. Like the decrees of the Medes and Persians, it is unchangeable, and therefore unadvancing. It may astonish some persons that such a system should have endured so long; but has it not been owing to the forbearance of the Christian powers? Till within a very few years, the Cross and the Crescent were brought but little into contact. England, the centre of Liberal Propagandism, had remained inactive, if not indifferent. The case is now greatly altered; and the ideas which are penetrating the imperial dominions of the Sultan from without are subversive altogether of those immobile principles upon which, hitherto, the authority of Mohammedanism has rested. Internally, the power of the sovereign is scarcely more consolidated. In Asia, the Druses are in open rebellion against the Sultan, probably on the same religious grounds; Egypt is burning to declare herself independent; Candia is like a volcano charged with insurrectionary lava: Tunis hourly expects the death of its master and a violent commotion when he dies; Morocco is menaced by two independent Christian nations; and even in India the authority of the Koran is daily receiving a silent but not less forcible blow. The fact is, the whole spiritual empire of the

Moslems is demoralized; everywhere it is in arms against itself, with a foreign force threatening its flank; and before long we may expect to hear of vast changes having taken place in the land where the Crescent has so long shone, and the Koran been regarded as the sole rule of faith."

The *Times* correspondent states :—

"What, then, are the causes of the discontent that prevails—a discontent which one hears expressed in every society and at the corner of every street, and which has found vent in the columns of the suspended papers? Unhappily, the only difficulty in answering this question lies in the extent of the evils, and the consequent length to which their enumeration must run. To the most casual observer it must be apparent that, notwithstanding the support it has received from the Western Powers, the empire is crumbling to pieces, and that nothing but a radical change of the whole system of administration can save it. Day by day the hold of Government on the principalities and provinces of the empire is relaxed. In Wallachia and Moldavia the authority of the Porte, which has long been waning, is yet further diminished by the decision of the late Conference at Paris, which forbids the armed interference of the Sultan's Government in any event without the sanction of the Powers. In Servia a barbarous and tyrannical prince not only manifests a determination to act in opposition to every obligation he is under towards the Sublime Porte, but presumes upon its weakness and apathy to oppress his subjects, and abrogate all the constitutional guarantees of personal liberty. Bosnia has but lately relapsed into a state of momentary repose. Of the Herzegovina it is better not to speak. In Thessaly and Epirus there is a large party which wants but the opportunity to renew the attempt which it made at the commencement of the Crimean War. Candia is at this moment only not in open revolt because a large addition has been made to the troops at the disposition

of the authorities. Egypt is a reed on which it is not good for the Sultan to lean. The Governors of Syria and Arabistan are constantly occupied in contests with the Arab tribes, whom they never reduce to order. The army is unpaid, the different corps of which it is composed being from six to eighteen months in arrear."

The plot thickens. Palestine emerges steadily into universal sympathy. Coming events cast their shadows before. The sudden insurrection of the Druses—aided and abetted by the Turkish authorities—and the massacre of Christians of every denomination in Damascus and other populous towns of Palestine have startled all Europe.

A correspondent of the *Times*, writing from Beyrout, July 5, 1860, gives the following account of the fearful tragedies of which Palestine is now the theatre—

"This year is really one of the hardest this country has seen, and one which, perhaps, history will signalize as unequaled in these places. I informed you in my last how the Mohammedans rose here, and the agitation of the town, after that the pretended murderer of the Moslem was brought in the same day, as was promised, and executed at two o'clock the following morning; but the most credited opinion is that he was not the murderer, but that the real murderer is a Moslem himself, who got into a quarrel with the murdered man and stabbed him with a knife, which caused his death. Suspicion, of course, was cast upon a Christian, who was seized in the afternoon and laid in prison, and sentenced to death upon the evidence of a boy only eight years old. He before his execution called for a priest, and having made his confession declared that he never killed the man, but he said that—'I am quite willing to offer myself as a sacrifice for the tranquillity of others.' Asking God to receive his soul and pardon his persecutors, he was led to the place called Bourge-el-Kashef,

and beheaded there—crowds of the Mohammedan mob gathering together held his head by the hair, and beating it against the ground, cursed his religion, his nation, and the Cross—all this, and the Christians keeping silence: besides that, Moslems had wounded and ill-treated many of the Christians before, causing many to fly to the vessels at sea, and many of whom passed several nights on board. About fifteen hundred natives and fugitive Christians departed to Alexandria, Syria, Malta, and other places, among whom are all the members of our family except myself, who remained here to see after our affairs; but I was obliged to abandon our house to the servants. Some Moslems are sleeping there to watch it, not having confidence of safety there, notwithstanding the assurances of Ismail Pasha, who placed there about sixteen soldiers to guard the place against any attack of Druses who might visit Beyrout; but I believe that neither Druses nor Moslems will do anything at Beyrout without being allowed by the Government. For this reason I thought of leaving the place lest I should fall into the trap, when help would be too late, and so share the same fate with those of Dar-el-Kamar, Hasbeya, and Rasheya. Everybody is prepared at any moment to run away, and every steamer takes a full cargo of passengers, running from the impending death; trade is done away with, as if our people here were created not to know what money is at present. The Ottoman Bank and other banks are without money; even the most respectable money-changers do not possess above 100 piastres. The Ottoman Bank having the cash of some current accounts sent it every night on board the English ship. Yesterday we had news from Damascus that the Moslems burnt six villages in the neighbourhood, pillaged them, and killed every one who did not embrace Ismalism, giving all the women who became Mohammedans to the soldiers and others for wives. The Christians of Damascus are in a terrible panic, expecting death every moment, keeping in their houses, and spending every day between 60,000 and 70,000 piastres between bribes and expenses, besides

those expenses incurred by them through the poor fugitives who took refuge there from Hasbeya and Rasheya. I would not that your eye should ever see such a sight of fugitives of all ages and both sexes, widows, and orphans, as the number of these that this war has left does not fall short of 30,000. Both these and the other fugitives are supported by Beyrout and Damascus, mostly by the former, and we can nearly say that both we and they are ruined. Things at present are rather quiet; since the destruction of Zahleh and Dar-el-Kamar, nothing of importance has occurred, but no one knows how things will end. Both Frank and natives are in a state of amazement and confusion, some hoping that something may be done, and others in a state of utter despair, but all are equally distressed and miserable; indeed I cannot describe to you all that has occurred in this country; pen and tongue are not able to represent the facts that have taken place; they could not be exaggerated."

The City correspondent of the *Times* (July 23) thus notices the action of France in this matter:—

"The funds have remained throughout the day at the heavy prices of last evening, owing to the intimation that France intends to land 8000 men in Syria, and having thus virtually superseded the authority of the Porte to oppose the formation of a mixed commission to reorganise the country, the inhabitants, perhaps as in Savoy and Nice, being protected by the French soldiery in the manifestation of their wishes."

The *Moniteur* says:—

"Letters from Beyrout contain details respecting the horrible massacre at Deir-el-Kammar, and pointing out the odious conduct of the Turkish authorities and of the Governor of Beyrout.

"A message from Toulon, dated the 21st of July, announces that two more large war transport steamers

are being manned. Several are ready. A telegraphic despatch in the *Presse* asserts that they had already taken their departure.

"The French consular reports received from Syria state that the massacres which have taken place are the result of a conspiracy of the Mussulman fanatics. The report having spread among the Druses that European diplomacy was about to drive away the Turks from Europe, they determined on exterminating the Christians in Syria. The French Consuls therefore state that the Porte will be unable to repress a rising which has been organized in its own favour.

"Under these circumstances the Emperor of the French has declared that, although inviting the Powers who have signed the treaties of the 30th of March, 1856, to give their concurrence for an efficacious protection of the Christians in Syria, France, on her own account, will never fail in her mission of humanity, and is resolved upon immediately sending an armed expedition to Syria."—*July 22.*

These are indeed awakening news, pregnant with gigantic issues. The fearful massacres the Turk has fostered or connived at in Lebanon and Damascus have at length stirred the indignation of Europe, and gathered to the coasts of Syria the fleets of France and Russia and England. It looks as if the restoration of the Jew as a nationality in Palestine were now emerging from the realm of prophecy into the region of actual history. His restoration is the burden of many prophecies. He is to have a footing and a home in Judea. He is to have what Belgium and Greece and Italy have vindicated for themselves—a country. The Moslem cannot hold Palestine any longer. Sick and dying, he can barely retain Constantinople, much less a distant dependency. If he would, he ought not to be allowed. The claims of humanity cry aloud against that miserable

régime which is politically effete, and that horrid cruelty which will brand its history while it lives. It seems almost supernaturally arranged that the three great Powers whose presence in Palestine in deadly conflict is shadowed out in prophecy—Russia, France, and England—should be drawn together in that land, each to protect the section or colony of Christians which holds its confession. Were England now to take up her mission, and rally the Jewish people around Jerusalem, and send agents over Christendom to call Israel home, it is highly probable that the slumbering but not extinguished fires of Hebrew patriotism would be rekindled, and a nationality planted in Palestine by our efforts, and under a Divine presidency, which would keep open for us the route to India, and strengthen our hands in resisting that Franco-Russian confederacy which already looms on the horizon, and menaces the peace as it will assail the greatness and prosperity of our country.

The following correct account of the extent of the massacres appeared in the *Times* of July 25 :—

“ The population of the town of the Zahlé, from 12,000 to 15,000 in number, all Christians, twice repelled an attack of the Druses ; but on a third attempt the latter had recourse to a stratagem, which succeeded. Knowing that the Christians expected reinforcements, they prepared banners bearing the Cross, and placed them at the head of a band of 2000 men, who, in disguise, marched towards Zahlé, singing the patriotic songs of the Christians. The inhabitants of the town, deceived by the trick, advanced to meet them, but the Druses received them with a volley of musketry, after which, rushing on with drawn swords, they slaughtered many and put the rest to flight. Some days previously to this the women and children retired into the mountains, so that the massacre was not so great as it had been in

other towns. But it was most afflicting to all of us, and especially to me, for I lost Father Billotet, who belongs to the Franc-Comtois, as I do. Three of our holy brethren were murdered near him, as were also a great many other persons who had sought refuge in our house, thinking that they would find a safe asylum under the flag of France. Twenty-one nuns are stated to have been dishonoured by the Turkish soldiers and the Druses in a house in which they had assembled. I cannot, however, positively guarantee this fact, as I do the others. Two of the nuns were killed. But what caused the greatest terror to the inhabitants of Zahlé, and compelled them to take flight was, that the Turkish soldiers fired cannon against the town and reduced it to ruins. Rachafia and Jedaïdi, towns in the Anti-Lebanon, have undergone the same fate in consequence of the treason and bad faith of the governors. A great number of the Christians, after the destruction of the towns and villages in which they resided, sought shelter in the caverns and woods of the mountains ; but the Druses, to prevent any from escaping, hunted them out with large dogs. Having found about a hundred in one spot, they tied their hands behind their backs and then proceeded to put them to death in a most cruel manner, first cutting off arms or hands, or tearing off pieces of flesh, or pulling out their eyes. Some they even burnt alive. Beyrout, notwithstanding the presence of the Consuls-General and of more than twenty vessels of war in port, is neither safe nor tranquil. The Turks there have been on the point of rising, and on the slightest alarm the Christians would be massacred. This the latter know, and accordingly a great many of them have left for Alexandria or Marseilles. At Saida the same fears are justly entertained, and the principal parties have departed. In this town everything was prepared for massacre and pillage, and the very day and night were designated. The Turkish Governor and Mufti were on the point of giving the signal when the French admiral at Beyrout, having been informed of the dangers which menaced us, sent in great haste one of the vessels under his

orders. The commander of the vessel on arriving went to the Governor to ask if he would answer for the security of the town. 'I cannot do so for an hour,' was the reply which he received. The officer then disembarked on a little island about 100 of his men, and returned to Beyrout in his vessel to give the admiral an account of his mission. The admiral immediately came here with two vessels of war, two English vessels accompanying him. The arrival of these forces intimidated the Druses and the Turks, and they made no attempt against the Christians. The Pasha of Beyrout has also arrived, but he has decorated the chief of the Druses, apparently as a recompense for having allowed more than 2000 Christians to be massacred, and more than eighty villages to be burnt. The French admiral, having obtained from the civil and military authorities a promise to protect the city, has returned to Beyrout, leaving us, however, one of his vessels to keep the Turks and Druses in check. Nevertheless, fears are increasing, and danger appears to become each day more menacing. If France does not hasten to our help we shall share the same fate as the other sacked towns. The Druses announce that the number of Christians they have massacred in the mountains of Lebanon, is 22,000, but the Christians do not believe that it exceeds 15,000."

The effect of these tidings on the Russians has been the revival of their inveterate hatred of the Moslem. The doom of the Turkish empire is thus precipitated. Western support now, like Western compassion, will be impossible. In the *Times* of July 25 is given a letter from Petersburg, to the following effect:—

"I cannot describe to you the increasing excitement which prevails here in consequence of the news from Syria. The French and German journals which contain them are read with an avidity which surpasses all that could be imagined. The recital of the massacres, profanations, and atrocities of which the Druses and Turks

have been guilty excite an irritation which is carried to an extreme of fury. I thought I knew the Russians, but I was deceived as to their character. The merchant holds certain religious opinions, but with the English, French, and Germans, he is mild and tolerant, and the difference of religion does not prevent him from showing them great kindness. As to the people, they are possessed of a superstitious faith, but they live on good terms with all Christian sects. Both merchants and people entertain a violent fanatical hatred against all Mussulmans, but particularly against the Turks. The upper classes are indifferent in matters of religion, but politics and national traditions have accustomed them to execrate all that is Mohammedan. All classes are unanimous in stigmatizing—cursing is the word—the cruelties of the Turks. The passions of the people are excited to a pitch I could not have suspected, and at this moment one might believe that every Russian is a fanatic, which is certainly not the fact, but the old hatred so strongly resembles fanaticism that one might mistake it. There is but one voice, one cry, ‘We must succour the Christians, exterminate their barbarous oppressors, revenge religion and outraged humanity, finish with the Turks, and drive them out of Europe.’ The army appears to experience even more violently than the people this paroxysm of anger. These soldiers, so mild in their relations with the people, have for some time past assumed a martial attitude; their features have become hardened and their eyes flash fire. One should see this metamorphosis to believe it. It is particularly at the camp of Krasnoe-Selo that the spirit of the army shows itself with the greatest energy. When the Emperor makes his appearance the acclamations, which were always warm and sincere, are now enthusiastically frantic, of which the meaning can escape nobody. The Emperor appears to be perfectly well satisfied with them, and the soldiers have received more presents than they had for a long time. The army appears to be convinced that they are on the eve of a war, and this feeling communicates an ardour which forms a strong contrast with that species

of languor and carelessness which were remarked during the last three years. At Moscow it is still worse, and what is remarked here cannot bear a comparison with the demonstrations which have taken place in the old capital of the empire. According to the best authenticated accounts we receive every day, the rage of the people there is unbounded. The orthodox population demand why troops are not already on their march against the miscreants—the infidels—who murder old men, women, and children, and who drink Christian blood. The people crowd their churches, and listen attentively to their Popes, whose sermons are allusions to the atrocities committed by the Turks, and who pray to God that His just anger may not fall on the heads of those cold and inhuman politicians who hear without shuddering the cries of the victims immolated by the Mussulman's cimeter, and who are not affected at seeing the palpitations of the smoking entrails of so many thousand Christians, their brothers in Jesus Christ. They say that holy Russia cannot long remain an accomplice to that cowardly indifference—to that hideous egotism—that treason to the Christian religion. These sermons, sometimes eloquent, inflame the multitude, and excite them to a pitch which we in our sceptical societies of Western Europe can scarcely comprehend. Here the people believe firmly, and one must not offend their opinions, unless one wishes to degrade himself in their eyes. For these reasons the authorities at Moscow, either because they coincide in opinion with the people, or that they have received orders to that effect, will not interfere with these manifestations. The soldiers, who are to be seen in the churches mixed with the people, make the sign of the Cross when they hear of the acts of barbarity which the priest narrates from the pulpit, exclaiming at the same time, 'When is the holy war to be commenced?' Old men who recollect the excitement which existed in the year 1812, declare that the irritation was then less terrible and less implacable. A stranger who should be transported to the old capital, and who should see the effervescence which prevails there, would

soon comprehend that when the religious passions of the Russians are once aroused they are really to be dreaded. Here in St. Petersburg the journalists use very strong language. Some of them demand that Russia shall form an alliance with France—chastise the miscreants, and even declare war against the powers who, under pretence of maintaining the pretended independence of the Ottoman empire, prevent justice from being executed. The censors, so difficult on other occasions, suffer everything to be said, and M. Westmann, the political director at the Foreign-office, was never so amiable. It is evident that he has received orders to act so."

The massacre at Damascus has been fearful. Damascus is alike one of the oldest and the most remarkable cities of the nations. It has remained the spectatress of the events, and scenes, and changes of four thousand years. It has formed a part of Babylon, Nineveh, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It prospered under each, and it survived them all. The Osmanlis, decrepit, and dying, and guilty, are its present rulers. It is situated on the banks of the ancient Abana, which descends from the heights of Antilibanus, and flows eastward across the plain on which Damascus now stands. This river fills the intersecting canals, and supplies the fountains, and adds beauty and fertility to the plains that stretch away from the city. Minarets and domes and gilded crescents rise up from the city in great numbers. Gardens and orchards extend eastward on both sides of the Abana, or modern Barada, of the richest luxuriance. On the streets of this city may be seen specimens of every race—the Turkish effendi, the Damascus merchant, the Druse shah and the Kurdish shepherd, the Bedouin and the fierce Albanian. In its bazaars are displayed embroidered silks and scarfs and carpets, and inlaid

ornaments from Persia, shawls from Cashmere, and weapons of war richly ornamented.

Here still exists "the street called Straight," referred to in Acts ix. 11. Here also is the very spot on which St. Paul was let down in a basket in order to escape the fury of his enemies. The house of Ananias is now a chapel for the *terra santa* monks. The whole population of Damascus amounts to upwards of 150,000, of which 74,000 are Mahometans, 14,000 Christians of various confessions, 5,000 Jews, and the rest Druses—strangers, slaves, travellers. The Mahometans are licentious, sickly, short-lived, and intensely fanatical, spending their whole life in visiting the harem, the mosque, and the bath. Their conversation is filthy and impure, and it is so among males and females. There is neither justice nor truth among these hypocrites, fanatics, and sinners.

The Christians have been rapidly increasing in numbers, in wealth, and influence, having long enjoyed a substantial protection from the English Consul. There are two patriarchs, a Greek and a Greek Catholic—the latter aided by Russian contributions. Protestant missions have also been conducted for many years, not without success. The Jews in Damascus are very rich, and have hitherto enjoyed protection under European Consuls. It is easy to see what a fearful calamity the con-
niving, if not active, Moslems and mountain Druses have inflicted on the Christians of Damascus. Intoxicated with fanaticism and the love of plunder—thirsting to glorify the Prophet, and to enrich themselves—zealous for the Koran, and greedy of the riches of the industrious Christian population—they have massacred at least five hundred Christians, and enriched themselves with the spoils.

It does seem to us that, if our country so defer to the miserable and decrepit Moslem that he shall be trusted to avenge and punish this horrible outrage, or so to magnify the non-intervention policy that no active steps shall be taken to bring the murderers to speedy and condign punishment, we shall have the Moslems rising wherever they have power, and exterminating Christians wherever they exist. . We trust that a more intelligent, humane, and dutiful policy will prevail. We have paid more than enough in blood and treasure to maintain the Moslem in Constantinople. We expected that our Christian brethren under the Crescent would enjoy, if not consideration, at least impartial justice and ordinary protection. If the Turk be unable to restrain the ferocity of his race, it is time we undertook to supply his lack of power. If he aids or abets this new propagandism, it is our duty to treat such treachery as it deserves. We have to deal with no isolated and accidental quarrels. It is a passion that has been steadily fanned, and a policy which will be satiated with nothing short of the extermination of Christianity. That these events are subject to the cognizance of Him who sits above the floods, and will work out those great problems of which the East is soon to be the theatre, does not affect our national duty or responsibility. God will fulfil his prophecies. Let man listen to his divine precepts. Judea looms into view. The way of the kings of the East is being prepared, and Israel will soon have a home.

THE WEST.

The Western nations of Europe are still heaving like the sea, and cannot rest. Each seems preparing for a con-

flict it cannot define. Belgium, Prussia, France, Austria, England, and Russia stand armed. Trifles agitate cabinets; slight sparks kindle serious conflagrations; straws are invested with ominous and oracular significance, and the fears of statesmen are interpreted as prophecies of trouble. What is very remarkable, the Papacy is again the great disturber of the earth, and threatens to suck into the vortex in which it goes down to destruction, thrones, and nations, and dynasties. Europe never can have peace till that system of sacerdotal despotism is rooted up and cast out of every land into which it has struck its roots.

Believing the papal system to be the exact historical expression of the prophetic and apocalyptic pictures of a great far-spreading and long-lasting apostasy—its seat at Rome, its head the man of sin, its pretensions blasphemous, its worship idolatrous, its agencies “lying signs and wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness,”—we expect its continuous wasting and decadence, under the judgment that began to sit on it in 1792, till it be finally, and amid terrible convulsions, destroyed by the “brightness of the Redeemer’s coming.” At present, the Papacy has come “into remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” She is being wasted to the uttermost, and in this the hour and power of her deserved retribution, she is one of the signs that mark the place we occupy and the time we live in. That her consumption is rapid is abundantly proved by every day’s intelligence from Rome. The intelligent correspondent of the *Times*, writing from Italy, thus describes the present condition of the Papacy:—

“The intense hatred of the Romans for the priests

and priestly rule loses, however, none of its intensity for the marvellous forbearance with which it is treasured up. The talk one hears from men of all classes, so soon as the subject is safely broached, is perfectly amazing. That the Romans, with hardly any exception, are utterly dead to all veneration for what distant Catholics hold most sacred and holy, has been matter of universal notoriety since the days of Dante, Boccaccio, Laurentius Valla, Ariosto, and Macchiavello. But hitherto, however they loathed and despised them, the Romans lived by their priests. The only recent experiments for the 'extinction of the Papacy in 1799 and 1810 reduced Rome to the condition of a French *chef lieu de département*, with hardly one half of its population. The Papal Court brought back with it lustre, importance, and a certain prosperity to the middle classes of the Holy City. It turned a penny by the sins of gay foreign visitors as well as by their penance; by carnival no less than holy week. A begging Church encouraged the mendicant habits of a lazy populace. Rome was half a convent, half a watering-place, and so long as the people lived by the Church they were willing enough to cry, 'Long live the Church!'

"But the Romans this year can get from the Pope neither *panem* nor *circenses*. Popular disaffection shows forth in all its nakedness. There is no *Trasteverino* willing to kneel as the pontifical carriage goes past, with his half-muttered '*Accidenti al Papa!*' an exclamation in which there was more of profaneness than deliberate malice. This year the papal coach and its occupant's blessings are shunned as the plague. People take to their heels wherever he appears, and the same care is taken to get out of the way of the red tassels on the frontlets of the sleek, black, Roman-nosed steeds which announce the approach of a Prince of the Church. The real fact is, the distress among the multitude is indescribable; all the evils of bad harvests, and even worse vintages, weigh upon the whole of Italy, but are felt more intensely among those lilies of the Roman field who toil not, neither do they spin. The transition

from the winter of 1859, when more than 30,000 foreign visitors emptied their purse for the benefit of Roman shops and inns, to the season of 1860, when an Englishman or a Russian is a *rara avis* in the Via Condotti, tells to a prodigious extent among the people, the price of whose bread was raised very sensibly even within the two short weeks I was in Rome, and for whom the very sourest wine has reached a price which their means cannot compass. Christmas has brought the Romans no pie this year, nor will Carnival yield them fritters, nor Passion-week treat them to cross-buns and oil-cakes. Starvation stares them in the face, and the work supplied by the Government at the public expense is neither adequate to the wants of the vast multitude of sufferers nor suited to the greatest number of them, nor so distributed as to screen at least those who have recourse to it from pressing necessity. There is dire distress in Rome, and the people, whether rightly or wrongly, stoutly lay it to the blame of the Pontifical Government. It is the Pope, with his obstinacy, who prolongs the uncertainties of the present political crisis, and thus scares wealthy travellers away from their gates. It is the Pope who, by his testiness, drove his Romagnese subjects to revolt, and robbed Rome of the revenue accruing to the capital from the subjected Legations. Together with the Pope and the Papacy, the Romans fall foul of religion and its ministers. There is hardly a word of opprobrium which is not fiercely hurled at the head of the priests: hardly a disparaging sneer against those 'black ravens,' or 'black swine,' that does not become widely popular, so soon as it comes out as a theatrical allusion, a pasquinade, or a ballad-singer's sally. There is deep-set, ruthless, rabid inveteracy of the whole mass of the population against the entire order of the priesthood—an animosity which seeks its vent at the present moment in a thousand covert ways, but which is sure to lead to some frightful open outbreak whenever an opportunity offers itself.

"Against this pent-up, but hardly concealed implacable feeling of animosity, the Pope has nothing to

oppose save prayers, blessings, and a firm resolution to follow the first martyrs of the Church into the Catacombs. His head minister, or secretary of state, wholly intent upon the accumulation of ill-gotten wealth, plays on his sovereign's fond, superstitious enthusiasm, to set him against his long-enduring imperial protector, and prolong this state of antagonism between Rome and France till such time as he may have made the whole or the best part of that wealth safe against the wrath to come. The Pope's zealous Ultramontanist champions, English, Irish, French, and Germans, beset the halls of the Vatican, encourage Pius IX. in his most absurd conceits, promise him crusades and *levées de boucliers* all over the Catholic world; they raise the cry of 'Austria to the rescue!' they dream of revolutions in France, of leagues of the 'Reds' with the 'Blacks,' of defections of troops, of sudden miraculous catastrophes, hastened, may be, by some 'providential' stroke, such as the one which rid the French throne of a half-converted, latitudinarian, Huguenot king. Among these worthies, some of the principal agents and officers of the French Emperor at Rome are, I know not with what good ground, confidently numbered—the now recalled Duc de Grammont, whose scanty intelligence is, in the opinion of some persons, eked out by more than diplomatic duplicity; and General Goyon, for whose talents, or, indeed, common-sense, the Romans never entertained the slightest respect, and whose religious zeal, however great it may be supposed, is not certainly proof against a single frown of his imperial master. The Romans, indeed, conceive that the good general's demeanour towards '*ce bon Saint Père*' is greatly altered of late, and especially since the arrival of the imperial intimation to which I alluded at the opening of this letter; and they describe him as listening to the Pope's speech at the opening of the American colleges in a supercilious, nonchalant, more than half-bored attitude, as of a man who has played his farce as far as he deemed it expedient, and considers himself now free from awkward and irksome restraint."

The *Times* justly remarks:

"The Pope appears at this moment to be very sick,—more sick than the Turk was even when Nicholas thought it time to take out administration to his effects. He has no strength whatever in his own body. Weak and tottering, he sometimes leans upon one strong man and sometimes upon another. Austria has held him up in the Legations, France has kept him upright at Rome, the Swiss have spread the terror of his name in the unwarlike towns. To all human foresight he seems on the brink of dissolution, and we should expect to see the crazy old bark go down in deep water if we did not remember how often before the same crisis has appeared at hand, and how wonderfully the waterlogged and dismantled hull has got into port again. It is wonderful, and at the same time pitiable, to mark the senile and impotent tenacity with which this old man clings to his right to do wrong at a moment when the whole system seems ready to perish. No person is more unreasonable to deal with than a man who is ready to stand still and be a martyr, but who makes it a point of conscience to continue to martyrize others. Pio Nono cannot in his conscience prevent that cloud of ecclesiastical locusts from devouring the Roman people, and he cannot withdraw his countenance from the kidnapping of Jews and the sack and pillage of Italian cities; but Pio Nono is quite content to die upon the steps of the Vatican if either Napoleon III. or Francis Joseph should wish to put him to death. They may break him, but they shall not bend him. They may 'demand from the Pope indispensable reforms in his States;' but he will refuse to do anything except to submit to death or exile—edifying the Catholic world with the exhibition of a Pope persecuted by the two eldest sons of the Church. Now, of course, this is precisely what no one wishes to do. No one out of Rome has any desire to injure a hair of the head of this obstinate old man. But so long as the French remain to protect him he will by his ecclesiastics and his bravos drain the country and destroy the

people; and, if the French go away, the people, exasperated beyond all moderation, will probably expel him. This is the dilemma. How it may end no man can foresee, but, in every event, we have great cause to congratulate ourselves that we Englishmen have no art or part in this matter."

The moral degeneracy of Italy under the influence of the Romish Church has reached a depth which nothing but a regeneration from heaven can arrest. The Roman correspondent of the *Times* thus writes of it:—

"However far from sanguine one may feel as to the success of such wise and generous provisions, certainly the most hearty blessings must be called down on the heads of the men who will at least make the attempt. Political emancipation, let me repeat it for the hundredth time, will never do anything for Italy unless moral regeneration go hand in hand with it; and the Italians will never become aware of their importance as free men till they rise into consciousness of their dignity as mere men. What with squalid Carmelites and greasy Franciscans, with white hoods, black hoods, and other lay brotherhoods, with their broken nobles and other *poveri vergognosi*, we are beset with such a variety of amateur mendicancy that we must needs come to the conclusion that hardly any man in Italy is ashamed to beg. If he be too well off to ask for himself he will appeal to your bounty in behalf of the 'Virgin of the Seven Sorrows,' of the 'poor souls in Purgatory,' and other abstract beings, who may have mouths, but certainly do not eat the bread you are so earnestly entreated to bestow. Roman Catholicism, whatever good or evil it may else have done, has allowed beggary as far as its tenets have spread. From the remotest corners of the earth the hideous social leprosy seems to gather strength and consistency till it condenses itself into its vast lazaret at Rome. The taint of its ancient metropolis corrupts the whole peninsula, and from the number and squalor of the mendicants you can infallibly estimate the degree of

civil and religious emancipation any Italian community has reached or aspires to attain."

If visited by no such breath from heaven, some terrible revolution generated in the people's breasts, and under a sense of no ordinary wrongs, will rend the whole system in pieces.

THE NORTH.

It is barely possible to read the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel and fail to see the outlines of the future destiny of Russia. During the Russo-Turkish war I directed attention to this subject, and nothing that has since occurred has shaken my convictions. In order that my readers may have the identification and the mission, or rather doom of Russia clearly and fully before them, let me present the inspired sketch:—

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the moun-

tains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? Therefore, Son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God: In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the

sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."—EZEK. xxxviii.

What and where are the nationalities delineated or designated by these names? In Genesis, chap. x., we read the sons of Japheth are Gomer, and Magog, Madai, Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech. Any accurate map will show that northern Europe is peopled by Tubal, Meshech, and Magog. Josephus says: "The Scythians were called Magog by the Greeks." Pliny says, "Hierapolis, on being taken by the Scythians, was called Magog." Caucasus is derived from, or rather compounded of, Gog and Chasan—"Gog's fortified place."

Moschi or Mœsi, east of the Caspian, are the people of Meshech. The Araxes was called originally Rosh, whence the Russians. Bishop Lowth writes: "Rosh taken as a proper name in Ezekiel, signifies the inhabitants of Scythia, from whom the modern Russians derive their name." Gomer's descendants peopled Germany, and many of them spread into France.

Josephus says: "Gomer founded the Gomari, whom the Greeks at that time called Galatæ; and that Magog

founded the Magog, whom the Greeks then called Scythæ." "All the Galatæ," says Strabo, "were called Celtæ by the Greeks." The Galatæ of the Greeks were the Galli of the Romans.

Isidore, A.D. 400, Orig. lib. ix., says: "Gomer, ex quo Galatæ," *i.e.* Galli. It would therefore seem that Russia will be followed in her last and finally disastrous, though at first victorious, irruption by Germans and French, and that, allied and led by the autocrat, these will translate Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. into history.

The thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel indicate the course of Russia to be eastward, aided and abetted by Gomer, or Germany, and his bands. The Rev. Mr. Chamberlain, who has devoted much and able research to this very subject, is persuaded and does not hesitate to state that France, as originating in Gomer, is "one of the bands," and will move in the same conspiracy and along the same lines. The aggression of Russia in 1854 was premature; as predicted, it was turned back. But its last and greatest will carry her through Constantinople, the gate of Jerusalem, into Palestine, while the restored Jews are dwelling in it, when her hosts shall perish in a hurricane of wrath. Every Russian looks eastward. He calculates on taking Constantinople on his march, and occupying Palestine. Tarshish and her ships, and merchants, and lion power has been shown by Chamberlain to be England, and Dedan and Sheba, the countries of spices and precious stones, and ivory, and ebony, the parts of Arabia contiguous to India. Victoria is now literally Queen of Sheba, for India has recently become a part of our empire in a nearer and closer sense than before. May she continue to see, and adore, and trust in a greater

than Solomon ! Her empire becomes at once the protectress of God's ancient people, and the antagonist of the northern coalition. Peter the Great said, "I look upon Russia as called on to establish her rule over all Europe, and its invasion of east and west as a decree of Divine Providence."

Already the signs of the next and last eastward raid of Russia appear. France, according to the following extract from *Opinion Publique* of March 28, 1860, is not unwilling to expedite it :—

"But the alliance so imprudently broken off for a question which there was no serious reason for people on the other side of the Channel to trouble themselves with—this alliance was the security for Western Europe. THE INHERITANCE OF THE SICK MAN IS ABOUT TO OPEN. Constantinople may from one day to another become the Gordian knot of European policy, and on the shores of the Bosphorus the Anglo-French alliance can alone counterbalance the power of Russia. The time is coming—the symptoms of the final crisis are multiplied, and the Emperor Alexander has not forgotten either the policy of his father or the will of Peter the Great."

The *Czar*, a Polish journal, noting the vast preparations for war made by Russia, in Asia, says :—

"Russia has prepared a great expedition, the pretext of which is to chastise the Khan of Khiva, but which is only a mask for vast projects. For fifteen years Russia has been working towards the possession of Mongolia and of the Kirgisen ; she has organized their hordes by providing them with officers, arms, and money ; and at this present moment an army of 200,000 horsemen, consisting of the Tartar and Mongolian tribes of Central Asia, well armed, hardened to fatigue, and accustomed to traverse the greatest distances, has taken the field under the orders of Russia. At the same time, Russia

is doing all she can to excite the Persians and the Affghans to a war against England, and to join their armies to the Tartar hordes she is urging towards India. If she succeeds—if the independent and hostile tribes to England beyond the Ganges are gained over—it is doubtful whether England will be able to maintain her dominion in the East Indies. Incalculable changes may, therefore, be expected in India as well as in Central Asia. Perhaps the days of Gengis Khan may be renewed, and India once more become the prey of the Tartars.”

The *New York Herald*, of October 11, has the following letter from St. Petersburg, dated September 17, 1858:—

“We have received later advices from Irkutsk, containing some further particulars relative to the treaty concluded by General Mouravieff at Algoor, and abundance of speculations concerning its future consequences. It appears that the frontier between the two empires has been fixed with great accuracy, and in a manner exceedingly advantageous to Russia. Down to the mouth of the Oossoori, which empties itself into the Amoor in 48 degrees latitude north, and 135 degrees longitude east of Greenwich, the boundary is formed by the latter river; but from the point just mentioned a line will be drawn to the Canal of Tartary, by which not only both the banks of the Amoor, but the whole triangular tract of land enclosed between that mighty stream and the sea, and which would be its natural embouchure if it did not make so sudden and inconvenient a bend to the north, will become Russian territory. This stipulation is of the highest possible importance; in fact, the cession of the neck of land in question was absolutely necessary to render the Amoor fully available to its new owners. In consequence of the eccentric direction which the river assumes after it has stretched down to the south as far as the forty-sixth degree, it falls into the sea over seven degrees to the north of that point,

and, the climate of those regions being much more severe than might be anticipated from their geographical position, an enormous quantity of ice accumulates at the mouth of the Amoor during the winter, and renders it inaccessible for nearly nine months in the year. This is a serious drawback, since it restricts maritime operations at Nikolayersk, the present chief port of the Amoor country, to the brief period of three months, besides which the navigation is very much impeded just there by shoals and sandbanks that only leave a narrow channel for vessels of great burden. Now, however, this difficulty will be obviated by transferring the port to Castries Bay—a splendid natural harbour in the Gulf of Tartary, which is open almost all the year round, and whence a railroad might be easily constructed to Maryinsk—a second Russian station, further up the Amoor, which is only about sixty versts distant, and would save no less than 300 versts of river, navigation. A small Russian settlement has existed at Costin's Bay for several years, but it was not thought advisable to found a regular naval arsenal there as long as it was doubtful whether the Chinese would agree to give up that portion of their territory in addition to the country on the left bank of the Amoor. According to the last accounts the inhabitants of Siberia were hastening to take possession of the promised land. Whole caravans of emigrants were passing through Nertchinsk on their way to the south, and detachments of troops were being moved down the river, with stores and artillery, to garrison the new forts that are in course of erection. General Mouravieff, or Count Mouravieff-Amoorsky, as we must now call him, had left Algoor for Nikolayersk, whence he was to proceed to Costin's Bay and the island of Sagbalin, where some Russian settlements have been recently established.

“The negotiations with China respecting the north-eastern frontier being thus brought to a successful termination, our diplomatists are directing their attention to the boundary that divides the two nations in a more westerly direction, where there are tracts of debatable

land of still greater extent, though of less importance in a commercial point of view. It is now about a century since Russia, passing down from the north, and China, advancing from the east, found themselves face to face in the heart of Central Asia. The Chinese, or rather the Mantchoo Tartars, who seem to have been more formidable enemies than they are at present, overthrew the kingdom of Zoongaria, subjugated Kashgars, Yackerd, and Kotan, and established their sway over the whole region that has since been known by the name of Chinese Tartary. At first the Russians were not a little alarmed at this sudden irruption, which carried everything before it, and put an inglorious end to half a dozen Tartar dynasties, who traced their descent from the famous Genghis-Khan. The Governor of Siberia applied to St. Petersburg for reinforcements, and a line of wooden forts were erected along the Jitish and Johim to keep off the invaders in case they should show an inclination to extend their conquests further north. After this unwonted exhibition of pugnacity, however, the Celestials relapsed into their normal state of indolent contemplation, or rather, they were satisfied with the acquisitions they had made, and were not anxious to engage in a war which their natural sagacity must have told them would prove a more difficult task than a contest with semi-barbarous tribes, against whom their heavy artillery was irresistible. By degrees the Chinese began to draw back their advanced posts, and the Russians slowly pushed on as the others receded. The great Lake Zaisans, in Zoongaria, which the Chinese considered part of their dominions, began to be frequented by Russian fishermen; a military station was erected to protect them, and by and by Russian travellers and surveyors were seen beyond the mountains of Torbogatai and Kobdo, to the great annoyance and disgust of the Mandarins who guarded the limits of the Flowery Kingdom. Now and then a quarrel took place; a Siberian trapper or two was decapitated by the Celestials, or a long-tailed Chinaman transfixed by the lance of a Cossack; but such little *escarmouches*

led to no further result, and were not taken notice of by either of the two Governments; the Governors of Western Siberia and of Chinese Tartary continued to interchange compliments and expressions of goodwill, and caravans were allowed to pass without difficulty from Seimpalatiask and Orenburg to Kooldja and Kashgar. For the last ten or fifteen years, however, or, in fact, ever since the first unsuccessful expedition of General Peroffsky to China, which caused the Imperial Government to bestow more attention upon the politics of Central Asia than it had previously done, the progress of Russia has been more decided and systematic, while the affairs of the Chinese have been rapidly falling into confusion and decay. Their frontiers are harassed by the Kirghis and Kokanzis, the city of Yarkena has thrown off their yoke, and a Chinese army that was despatched with incredible labour through the passes of the Thian Shan to reduce it to obedience has, we are informed, been repulsed from its walls, and forced to retreat with immense loss. In the meantime the country around Lakes Balkash and Issik-kool has been taken possession of by Russia, and a flotilla of steamers launched upon their waters; the Boginges and other tribes of trans-Siberia, heretofore subject to the Emperor of China, have acknowledged the sovereignty of the White Tsar, and the newly acquired territory has been secured by the erection of the two fortresses of Kopol and Viravy, which are garrisoned by strong bodies of troops and form the nucleus of a whole cluster of small Russian colonies. In this manner the Russian outposts have gradually advanced to the ridges of the Thian Shan, whence they look down upon the fruitful oases of Scosson. If China could be induced to relinquish her claim upon territories that are already escaping from her grasp, and to retire beyond the desert of Gobi, which would form an insurmountable barrier between the two empires, it would be no difficult matter to establish the *suzeraineté* of Russia over Chinese Tartary in the same way it has been done in Kokand and Khiva, and thus extend her frontier, or at least her influence, as far as Thibet and the Himalayas."

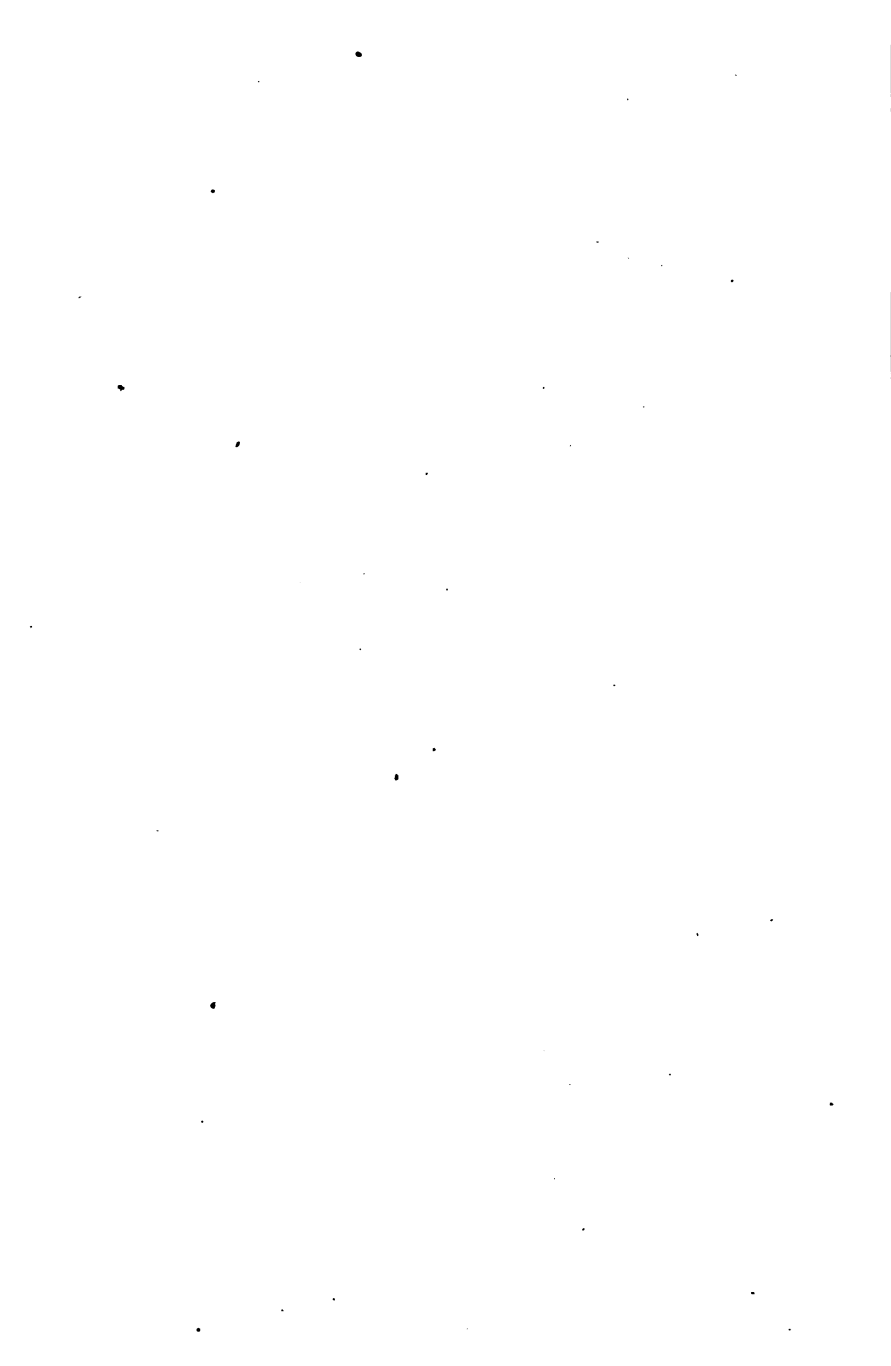
The Northern Autocrat will lay his hand on Turkey, Persia, Libya, and Egypt, but his entrance into Palestine is the signal of his overwhelming ruin. The northern hail of the seventh vial sweeps over the sunny East desolating and unchecked, but when it falls on the Holy Land it melts and disappears.

THE SOUTH.

The King of the South is probably the French Imperial Head, whose present power is gigantic. His shadow seems to be on every cabinet and capital. He is disliked and feared—denounced and dreaded. The disquiet of Europe has its centre and its source in Paris. He may be misinterpreted. But there must be somewhere apparent no small risk of mischief from this quarter when we find the Premier of our country, with all his sense of responsibility, plainly declaring his reasons for laying out large sums on fortifications to be the attitude and armaments of France. I do not believe, with the author of "Armageddon," or with Fabor, that Napoleon is the eighth and last imperial head; or, with others, that he is the Antichrist of the last days. But it does seem plain that he is inaugurating the "Great Tribulation," and is destined to inflict or bequeath no common complications on the European ten kingdoms.

It can surely have been no imaginary or fanciful condition of affairs that forced the Prime Minister of England to express himself as he did in relation to France, and to demand 9,000,000*l.* to be expended in fortifying the country. His lordship said: "It was impossible for any one to cast his eyes over the face of Europe, and see and hear what is passing, and not be convinced that the

future is not free from danger. It is difficult to say where the storm may burst, but the horizon is charged with clouds which betoken the possibility of a tempest." What used to be denounced as the visionary dreams of prophets is now turning out the solemn facts of the age, the calm statements of men who have "understanding of the times."



THE GREAT PREPARATION.

LECTURE I.

WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?

THE nearer the day of the Lord the more frequent and bitter the opposition of the scoffer. It is a pity it should be so. The prospect, however, is glorious—its certainty beyond dispute—its advent approaches every day.

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you ; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance : that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour : knowing this first, that there shall come in the last day scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”—
2 PETER iii. 1—4.

I HAVE been lately turning my mind with some intensity to the leading thoughts embodied in the chapter of which I have given the opening prefatory verses.

I intend to call attention—first of all to the words here prefixed, afterwards to these words, “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished;” and next in contrast to this, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men;” and then to the words, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” After these the inspired apostle adds more comforting words: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” But out of the smoke and embers we are taught to look for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The words on which I will dwell in this lecture are prefatory. They constitute the commencement of the apostle’s reply to some who are predicted to appear in the last days of this present Christian economy, and to indulge in scoffing. The object of their scoff, or subject of their special contempt, is what is announced in the fourth verse, the promise of “his coming,” and the dissolution of the world; and the ground on which they object to the possibility of a change is what they think

the highly philosophical one, but though highly philosophical no less grossly wrong—"All things continue exactly as they were;" therefore, argue these sciolists, all things will continue as they are for ever and ever. The apostle seeks to deepen the impression which he has made in his previous Epistle, and to prepare those who have read the first to enter into the higher and sublimer truths which he seeks to teach in the second. It is perfectly plain that he desires to convey to their minds no ordinary theme, and to impress upon their hearts no common and every-day lesson; for he says it is necessary to stir up their minds, and to stir them up also "by way of remembrance." In such words we are taught a most precious lesson, that great truths need to be reiterated, re-impressed, and retaught. The eloquent and excellent Dr. Chalmers was asked to what he attributed the great success of his preaching. His answer was, "To repetition." His way was to hammer one truth upon the people's hearts, and memories, and intellects, and never leave off till he was thoroughly satisfied he had convinced, or converted, or impressed them. The apostle says here, he would try to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance. But to stir up their minds respecting a truth implies that they were believers,—though fainting, and cold, and languishing believers. We do not stir up cold ashes, we let them alone; we stir up embers in which a few sparks remain that may be fanned into a flame, and give warmth to those that sit around them. Christians do not need lighting, they only need stirring; sickly they may be,—but dead, if Christians, they never can be. Therefore the great function the apostle here calls upon us to fulfil, is to stir up those that know, but too faintly feel, those magnificent verities which he

is going to teach in this chapter; and which are calculated to wean from the excessive love of the world that now is, and to win to the more enthusiastic love of those grander and more glorious things that are to evolve in the future. First of all, then, he calls upon them to be mindful of the words which were spoken by the holy prophets, and as he adds, the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. If so, the Old Testament is inspired; for here is a New Testament writer, inspired by the Spirit of God, bearing witness to the authority of the Old Testament writers, the holy prophets. This is only in harmony with another Divine testimony: "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Then ancient prophets were simply the registers of communicated truth, the amanuenses of the Holy Ghost, whose words have not been left to drift along the ages on the currents of tradition, and to coalesce with all that is corrupt and superstitious, nor to be distorted by oral and hand-to-hand transmission; they are set in writing, they are stereotyped in the sacred page, they are a permanent fixture; and hence, let man's commentaries change as they will, these truths remain; let the clouds sweep in every shape and on the wings of every gust of wind along the sky, the stars that are above them remain fixed, and only appear more brilliant and lustrous after the clouds are all passed away. The lessons that these prophets taught have lost nothing of their freshness and their force, and applicability to us. It is not true, that the New Testament supersedes the Old; it is only the complement of the Old; it perfects the sacred canon, the first book of which is Genesis; the last of which is Revelation—all that God inspired and all that man needs. But with these prophets he links also "us, the apostles."

He does not say, mark you, "us the apostle," as our friends in Rome would expect; the apostle Peter knew better. If Peter had been the Pope, he would have said, The words of the holy prophets, and of me the apostle, the first Pope, the supreme Pontiff; but not a word of this sort; he associates with himself the rest of the apostles—and shows that he retained in his memory what he felt in his heart, the magnificent truth that the church is founded not upon Peter, but upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ the chief corner and foundation stone.

Having thus disposed of these references, let us now turn to the subject matter which he is about to bring before us. He says, these scoffers who shall come in the last days, walking after their own lusts, will say, Where is this promise of the coming of our Lord? what do you mean by it? show up the foundation of it; prove the likelihood of its fulfilment; the truth is, they say, it is all a myth, a dream, a fable; all things continue as they were from the beginning until now. Were any one to ask the question soberly, where is this promise of the second glorious advent of Him who comes crowned with many crowns, to reign and rule, and shine before his ancients gloriously; I can refer him to an illustration from a prophet, although the apostle speaks of many; and an illustration from an apostle, though he speaks of many apostles. The promise is given in the prophet Daniel, where he says, in the seventh chapter, at the ninth verse; "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like a fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from

before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. And I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him," that is after he had come, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." I take this as the fullest promise, though far from being the only one, of this glorious epoch, or of his coming, contained in the prophets of the Old Testament. I select one from an apostle in the New Testament; and I will not take Peter's testimony, but Paul's. He says, in 2 Thessalonians i. 7: "To you who are troubled rest with us," a sabbath with us, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." If therefore the question be asked, where is the promise of his coming in the pages of a prophet? that prophet's testimony I have given; if it be asked, where is the promise of his coming in the words of an apostle? that promise we have now read. I need not add, that with the Bible in our hands, the promises of that grand era which still lies in the future, but looms already in the horizon, and comes nearer

every day, are scattered over the Scriptures like grains of gold in the quartz, or like stars in the sky, as seen on a frosty evening, or like flowers on the bosom of the earth in the mid time of June and summer. You can barely open a page of the Bible without reading them; and, therefore, if the scoffers of 1860 ask the question soberly, Where is it? We are ready to respond. But they do not want the information: like Pontius Pilate they ask the question, and take care to run away lest they should hear the answer. They mean a very different thing by "Where is the promise of his coming;" they mean, It is all nonsense. But whatever they think, we are to fortify ourselves against their scoffs, and against the satire, or the seeming effect that may be in those scoffs; and the apostle says to do so we must be mindful of the words spoken by the prophets. The way to be mindless of the scoff of the wicked is to be mindful of the words of the prophets and the apostles spoken before; the way to be sure, and to stand fast, and not to be shaken in our faith or in our hope, is to fall back upon what God has said, and to level his word against all the probabilities, and all the scoffs, and all the sneers of a world that knows not the truth, and loves not Christ's appearing. But plainly, when the world scoffs, we are not to scoff again; when it derides, we are not to return derision for derision, nor reviling for reviling. Our armoury is the Scripture alone; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty; ours must be Scripture against scepticism, patience in spite of scoffs, and fervent prayer without ceasing in the midst of both.

The apostle tells us that the time when these scoffers will come will be "the last days;" and that literally

the nearer the era of his advent, the more will such scoffers multiply. What a remarkable fact!—the scoffer who derides the promise is in his person, and by his presence, and by his scoffing, a proof of the fulfilment of the prophecy that he derides and tramples under foot. He scoffs to gratify his lusts; but in scoffing he stands up, contrary to his purpose or his design, and presents an evidence of the fulfilment of the very prophecy he derides. These men deny that Christ is to come at all; or if He is to come, it is not in their day. If some students, therefore, are so rash as to fix the “day and hour” of his coming, these men are so daring as to deny that He will come at all; if some show a curiosity too itching, these men show a carelessness and an unbelief that are surely vastly worse. We are to adopt neither extreme; no man can fix the day or the hour, but no man is warranted to say it will never come; while every man, according to our blessed Lord’s exhortation, is to watch the signs of the times, and to judge by them of the nearness of the day just as we judge by the clouds in the morning, and predict whether the day will be fine or whether it will be rainy, or what sort of weather it will be. For a complete photograph of these scoffers I refer to 2 Timothy iii. 1. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” In the very passage on which I am now com-

menting we see the connection between the heart and the head. A wrong creed is very frequently the product of a wrong state of heart. We need not only a pure, logical intellect by which to arrive at religious truth; but we need still more a heart purified from its fogs and corruptions by the Holy Spirit of God. Hence these scoffers, who deny a great Christian truth, do so whilst "walking after their own lusts." In other words, they look at truth through distorting prejudices and corrupt passions; and whilst they profess to defer to reason, to argument, to Scripture, they view all through the foggy atmosphere of their own depraved hearts. As well may you see the sun, the moon, and the stars through a London November fog, as God's truth through the atmosphere of a corrupt, a depraved, and an unregenerate heart. What men most need in order to be decided believers, is not greater light in their heads, but for greater grace in their hearts. It is evident also that when these men shall scoff at this truth, it will be when the truth of the Redeemer's advent is most preached and pressed upon their attention. As long as this truth sleeps in a library, or is banked up in a large clasped folio, or is not taught or spoken of at all, the world is not touched; but the instant that the truth locked up in the folio takes the shape of the tract or the pamphlet, and read once by tens, it comes to be read by tens of thousands, and is spoken of, and preached, and pressed by a great company of preachers; when it begins to kindle dead hopes in some, and to animate, and stir, and glorify living hopes in others; in other words, when the atmosphere of social and national life comes to be laden with a grand hope and to reverberate with great truths; then these unhappy men begin to

scoff: and they say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Then they bring all the artillery of satire and invective and misrepresentation to bear on the writers and preachers, walking as they do after their own lusts. But they cannot prevent the spread of truth; their attacks give wings to its words. The ferocity of their onslaught calls attention to the subject, and some read to scoff and learn to pray. Truth is stronger than battalions; a text in the Bible will outlast the pyramids of Pharaoh, and outshine the brightest of all the stars. As soon may Canute repel the advancing tides of the ocean, or Xerxes restrain the waves of the Hellespont by casting his chains over it, or the Roman Emperor Caligula prevail with the clouds by commanding them not to rain upon his royal head, as for any scoffer, or any sceptic, or any opposer to resist successfully the march of one single truth that has God for its author, Scripture for its matter, and the glorious issue that is here predicted for its ultimate and blessed result. Like the beat of time, like the procession of the stars, truth moves onward; its very enemies unintentionally help it; repression adds to its intensity, opposition only wakens up its advocates. Better an age of ardent, and it may be intemperate discussion, than an age of death, and apathy, and unconcern. A living dog is better than a dead lion. It is the action of the waves that keeps the ocean fresh; it is the stirring of the pool that gives it all its healing; it is the discussion of great truths that eliminates great corruptions, and establishes and vindicates what God has inspired, and what men's hearts yearn for to make them wiser, and happier, and better. But how do these scoffers express their scoffs? In some such way as this; if I were to expand their

sentiment, it would be this. Christ says: "Behold, I come quickly;" these scoffers say, What nonsense! Eighteen hundred years have rolled away, and he is not come; and yet he says, "Behold, I come quickly." John says: "He cometh with clouds, and he will send out his angels and every eye shall see him." They say, The clouds have only come with rain, and no eye has seen him; and angel visits to the earth have been few and far between. They read that the heavens and the earth shall be burned up, and that the elements shall dissolve with fervent heat; they answer, The earth is cooling instead of warming; and the heavens seem as fresh as if they had been made yesterday. It is said again: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall be turned into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven;" but, say they, the sun shines just as he has done all along, and the moon pursues her silvery way, and the stars stand out in all their magnificence and glory overhead. It is said that "he will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know Him not;" they say, No flaming fire is come; no vengeance has been taken; where then, you enthusiasts, you methodists, you fanatics, you evangelical fools, you ignoramuses, you babblers, where is the promise of his coming? We see no evidence of it; it is all fanaticism, all nonsense; there is no such advent to be expected; and as for the promise, God must have made a mistake when he inspired a prophet and an apostle so plainly and clearly to record it. Now then let us estimate these scoffs. These scoffers either impeach the truth of God, or they impeach the power of God; either God has revealed and inspired a promise which has no truth in it; and therefore, when the apostle says, "There are

two immutable things, an oath and a promise, in which it is impossible for God to lie," he said what was not true; or they say that God inspired the promise, but that events have proved too mighty for omnipotence; God has not been able to carry his promise into performance, his prophecy into history. We reply, neither of these is true. Heaven, with all its glory, may pass away like a vision, and leave not a wrack of it behind; the earth and all the things that are therein may be burned up; heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall not pass away from the least promise, prophecy, or precept until all be fulfilled. Now we believe that; and on the strength of that solemn statement we declare that they are the misguided ones who scoff, and walking in their lusts deny a grand truth; and that we are the honest interpreters and rational believers of Scripture who maintain and assert this truth.

But let us meet them on their own ground; let us take their arguments. It is of no use condemning or reprobating their scoffs; there is no argument in a scoff, there is no logic in satire; there is no proof or disproof in invective; let us take the argument they give; and they do argue—Satan can quote Scripture; the worst of men can argue; and when there is an argument, it is but right and fair that we should courteously and fairly meet it. The ground they adopt is this: they say there will be no such thing as a burning earth, or a dissolving heaven; there will be no such thing as Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; there will be no such thing as the glorification of the Church, the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven; the resurrection of the dead; and the

gathering together of all that have fallen asleep in Christ ; first, on this ground, that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation of God ; and secondly, that all things continue as they were since the days that the fathers, that is, the antediluvian patriarchs, postdiluvian patriarchs, the prophets, and the other heads of the Jewish Church fell asleep. Let us examine the first. All things, they say, continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. I am one of those who believe that this earth, though not in its present arrangement, is hundreds of thousands of years of age. This is not simply a guess : it can be proved, just as plainly as that two and two make four, that this earth existed, and was peopled with successive dynasties or races of living creatures, it may have been millions of years before Adam was made. Some when they hear this will say, does not the Bible teach us it is only 6000 years old ? It teaches no such thing ; all that the Bible teaches is, that 6000 years ago the earth, as it expressly says, was found in a state of chaos or "emptiness and desolation ;" and as an old dilapidated house rebuilt and made new, for the dynasty, or the race of man to be introduced upon it, and on it he was to stand or fall by his obedience or disobedience to God. The Bible does not say, six thousand years ago God created the heaven and the earth ; but, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

All the great geologists of the present day assert that suppose the Bible were shut we have irresistible proof, notwithstanding the flint arrow-heads in the drift, that the race of man is not older than six thousand years. This is very remarkable ; you do not find the least trace of man in the stratified rocks belonging to the earlier

formations ; you only find the trace of man in what is called the diluvial deposit ; that is, on the mere surface of the earth. This fact in science is a very precious one ; not that the Bible needs confirmation ; but that it shows that science, which in its unripeness quibbled with the Mosaic account, now that it is ripe and mature casts light and illustration upon it. But suppose we go back to the beginning of the creation of God, do all things continue as they were since that time ? What does the geologist find ? and I am not stating a difficult thing that needs much learning to understand. He finds that instead of all things continuing as they were from the beginning of the creation of God, whole races of living creatures created by God have become gradually, and utterly, and without exception, extinct ; over them masses of sand have fallen, soft as the dews upon the grass in spring ; those masses of sand by heat and pressure have become consolidated into rock ; and on the face or top of this rock, without the least link of connection with the extinct race many thousand feet down below, another race has been introduced by the creative act of God ; and it too has become extinct, and then it has been buried in its rocky sepulchre ; and again another race having no link of connection has been introduced. Instead of all things continuing as they were there have been successive creatures, successive decays for hundreds of thousands of years since the creation of God ; nay, we know as matter of fact that many of the very mountains themselves are composed of petrified or dead remains ; there are hills that are composed of dead infusoria millions and millions of which are requisite to make a little hill. Instead of all things continuing as they were, everything

has changed ; the ocean has left the beds that it occupied, and it occupies other beds ; there are hills where there were plains, there are valleys where there were hills ; and land and sea, hill and dale, have severally interchanged places ; and no forces that we are acquainted with can explain these vast changes ; and therefore the researches and investigations of science refute the stupid scoffs of those sceptic sciolists, and tell them all things have not continued as they were from the beginning of the creation of God. There is a very sceptical and infidel opinion upon this subject, though held by men who profess not to be infidels : Babbage, the author of the "Calculating Machine," a monument of ingenuity, and Professor Powell, in his work, "The Connection of Nature and Divine Truth," assume that the Deity constituted the world on a principle which, without further interposition, contains within itself the means of its perpetual renewal and stability ; and according to them providence is merely God seeing far forward the action of the laws of nature ; and so arranging and balancing things that those laws shall help instead of impeding : in other words, with these men, and according to this theory, of which there are a good many clever advocates in the present day, God is simply a grand mechanician, who comes into a world that he finds endued with certain laws ; he looks along the world, and he adapts all that is to happen to those laws ; and arranges it in such a manner that those laws shall promote and expedite his sublime purposes. But these ingenious reasoners forget that God made the laws ; he did not come into a world with made laws, and make the best of what he found ; but according to the simplest and the soberest truth of the

highest science as well as of Scripture God made the laws. Every law, as the world calls it—a fair word if used in a right sense—is simply an impulse or a touch of the finger of God. The materialist believes in a world wound up like a watch, and left to go till the spring and the chain are exhausted; or that God made the world and charged it like a locomotive, set it on the rail, and left it to go till the steam is exhausted and the fire dies out; and that meanwhile he has retreated into the depths of infinite space, an unconcerned spectator, or no spectator at all, of the action and progress of the world he has made. What is that but atheism? If true, this world is an orphan world; men are leaves tossed upon the wind; bubbles bursting in the flood; a family without a fireside, children without a father, a people without a nation, orphans without a hope or a home hereafter. Who would believe such rubbish? who could, with the Bible in his hands, acquiesce in such nonsense? The heart retreats from it in horror. What a pity that professors in universities and ingenious men should so work their brains as to bring out from those brains the most ingenious absurdities; ignoring on the very subject where its light is everything, that word in which we find that God not only made the world, but governs the world; that He is in its minutest movements as in its most magnificent convulsions; that a hair does not fall from the head, that a sparrow does not sink wing-wearied to the ground, without the cognizance and permission of our heavenly Father. How sublime is the philosophy of Christianity; how coarse, and uncomfortable, and intolerable, is the philosophy of unaided and unsanctified intellect!

But if I take this passage in the sense that all things

continue as they were since the fathers fell asleep, is that true? Turn to the days of Adam; of Enoch, who was translated; of Abel, who was martyred; or to the days that have elapsed since the flood, which made a very great change in the world. Where is Babylon, the lady and the glory of kingdoms? Where is Thebes with its hundred gates? Where is Palmyra of the desert? Where is Jerusalem, once the joy and the beauty of the whole earth? Where is Athens, the university of Europe, the eye of Greece, the resort of the learned, the idol of intellect? Where is Rome, that sent forth its conquering legions to the uttermost ends of the earth, and constituted by its sword the fourth great and universal empire? All is changed; from their graves these buried capitals protest against the logic of the scoffing sceptic, and declare that all things have not continued as they were; for they are discrowned, and their glory is buried in the dust, and they have ceased to be. All things have not continued as they were; great changes have taken place; great convulsions have occurred. The earth, from Noah at the flood to Napoleon in Paris, has undergone changes that have made it almost another world. Were a monk to rise up from his grave beneath the floor of Westminster Abbey, and to see an electric telegraph, or to stand and witness the express train sweep past him, or to see the "Great Eastern," he would believe that he fell asleep in another orb, and that by some mistake or chance he must have been wafted to a grave in a new and another world; he could not believe it was the same world; he could not conceive that this world is what he died in; and did he rise from the dead he would be the very first to say, if this world was proved to be the one in which he read his breviary,

and preached, if he ever preached—"What an absurdity for any one to say all things continue as they were since I fell asleep! for it seems to me as if the face of the world is so altered that I cannot recognize it as the same old, weary world in which I lived so long, and did penance and feasted and fasted, and fell asleep and died and was buried."

Let us adduce another proof, that all things do not continue as they were. Is there testimony for miracles reliable and conclusive? There unquestionably is. Take the testimony of friends, the admissions of foes; and you have as great and conclusive proofs that miracles were wrought as that Cæsar or Alexander lived, and reigned, and conquered. But what is a miracle? The interruption of the continuity of things, an interference with all things continuing as they were, an arrest of nature's laws; an interference with the action of the world. Prove, then, the occurrence of one single miracle; and if that miracle prove nothing else, it proves this, that all things have not continued as they were. The things as they were would be thus: a man is born blind, as we read in the gospel, and he lives blind, incurably blind, and he dies blind; but a miracle arrested the usual laws, and gave that man his sight. Lazarus died; the natural course is that the body should decay, and mix with kindred dust; a voice startles the ear of death, rings through the silent sepulchre, and Lazarus comes forth from the cold embrace of death, and mingles in the ranks, and sits at the table, and joins in the conversation of thinking, and reflecting, and living men. Therefore grant that there has been a miracle, and it is conclusive argument against the allegation of those that say that all things have continued as they were. But

now strange that men should be so anxious to get rid of a present God, and should be so desirous of demonstrating the extraordinary problem that the world is workable without God. Is it a more comforting belief that the world goes on, on its own account, without God; or that the world for its every movement in its orbit, and the human heart for its every pulse in your bosom, is dependent on the immediate touch and action of God? All the instincts of our nature lead us to think there is a God; that God not only was, but is, and will be; that God not only is, but acts, influences, governs; that the laws are living expressions from a Lawgiver; that incidents are not tumbling events, but emissaries from the throne of God himself.

In the words of one of the most sagacious, acute, and reflective of minds—I mean Benjamin Franklin, when speaking in a great American convention in 1787—"I have lived a long time, now eighty-one years; and the longer I live, the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in all the affairs of mankind;" a wise, a just, and a scriptural sentiment. It is said by Combe, an ingenious writer on physiology, a man of genius and intellect, but very wrong in some things: "Man is sole master of his own destiny, at least, in this world, by means of obedience to natural laws." I do not believe this; I would appeal from Combe, the great physiologist, to one who is greater still, but in another department, the great poet of our country who answers him in two lines,

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

I leave the scientific man in his scepticism, and I take

the poet in his inspiration; and believe that there is a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will. In one sense, I admit, the fixity of the laws of nature as a right thing. It is necessary that things should continue in one sense as they are. For instance, the physician discovers that certain medicines are possessed of a certain action, and he administers them, assuming when he administers them the fixity of the laws which science has discovered. In the same manner we calculate that the sun will set at midsummer at such an hour, and at the equinoxes at such an hour, and that darkness will begin or darkness will depart at such an hour. These are continuous laws; and there is a sense, unquestionably most important, in which we can say all things continue as they were; if they did not, there would be no progress, no social comfort, there would be no discoveries that would be of value or of practical benefit to mankind. But it is too bad to quote the very thing that proves the perfection of the arrangement as evidence that the machine-maker has left it to itself; because it is perfect, and does not work by fits and starts and irregularities, to argue that therefore God is not in it, is neither logic, nor scripture, nor common sense. Because He has given us laws to regulate our conduct, and shown us a basis on which science can construct its inferences, and medicine can achieve its results; to say because the watch goes so well, there never was a watchmaker, and that there is no watch-keeper to take care of it, and there never was a world-maker, and there is no world-keeper to look after it now, is absurd; it is, to quote the very excellence of the work as disproof of the presence and control of the artisan or the maker. But we Christians need not reply to such arguments;

we have a more sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place. One solitary, "Thus saith the Lord," is worth a cart-load of philosophical arguments; and the less a Christian looks to science for his religion, and the more he looks "to the law and to the testimony," the brighter will be the light that shines upon his steps, the surer and the stronger will be his convictions. An old covenanter used to be plagued with several scientific persons, who quoted all sorts of ingenious things against his convictions and his creed. In his own Scottish dialect he answered them only in one way; "Rax me the book;" that is, Give me the Bible. He held no argument on their grounds, no discussion on their premises; whenever they urged what seemed to them conclusive against a grand truth, the venerable old man opened the Bible, put his finger on the text, and read it, and said, "That assures me that what I hold is right, and I care not how you argue, nor how long you argue; what you say must be wrong."

And therefore, "unto them that look for Him, He will come the second time without sin unto salvation." Therefore, "Behold, I come quickly;" therefore, "He shall be revealed to be admired in all them that believe;" therefore, "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him;" therefore, He shall ascend his throne, and summon all before Him, and assign to each an inexhaustible retribution. Therefore, there is but an empty scoff, there is no argument, no conclusiveness, no force at all in, "All things continue as they were from the beginning, and since the fathers fell asleep;" for a word made the world, and a word will wind up and terminate the world. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

LECTURE II.

THE WORLD WILL LAST OUR DAY.

God has proved more than once in history that the continuity of things and the fixity of laws are dependent on his will. We need much to feel this.

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, and by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water ; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”—2 PETER iii. 5, 6.

IN this passage, on which we proceed to make some remarks, we have the apostle's second answer to objections. He might have merely said, All things have not continued as they were from the beginning ; but the Spirit has been pleased, by the pen of his amanuensis Peter, to adduce proofs, and facts, and evidences. The disproof of the scoffer's assertion here assigned is this—that “by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water ; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” Here is an instance of God's word making a world ; and secondly, of the same word destroying a world ; in which last illustration he refers expressly to the flood. The argument of the apostle Peter here employed is just this ; if the word of

God as it fell from the lips of Deity, and was launched into space, created the material orbs, that word launched again from the same lips will destroy, if He has promised to do so, the orbs that He has made. If that word, according to his argument, opened the fountains of the great deep, and the windows of heaven, and brought upon the earth a flood that rose fifteen cubits above the crags of Ararat, his word is no less competent again, if He has said that it shall be so, to destroy the world. Wherever God has uttered a prophecy to accomplish anything, He has power, as these facts prove—apart from any power ascribed to Him in the Scriptures—to carry that prophecy into performance. Wherever He has uttered a promise, if the facts adduced be facts, He has power to fulfil that promise; wherever He has uttered a menace or a threat, He has power to carry that threat into execution. But perhaps these scoffers, who say, “Where is the promise of his coming?” deny what Peter here asserts, that God made the world. Theirs, if entertained, is a strange belief. The book to which we appeal says it is the fool, not the wise man, that hath said in his heart, “There is no God.” But I may reason with them even on their own grounds. Suppose I shut the Bible, do we discover no footprints of Deity upon the sands of time? Is there in the length and breadth of the area of our world no vestige of a Creator, no solitary proof of design? Take a flower—the rose, the violet, or the lily—examine it minutely; analyze it. Chemistry can tell you and lay before you all its constituent elements; but no chemistry can rebuild or reconstruct it, give it its beautiful tints, or impart to it its rich and delicious fragrance. Man can mar, man can destroy, sometimes he can mend, but man

cannot create. Let us adduce, for instance, the ocean steamer; would a sensible man—suppose he had no historical experience—ever imagine that an ocean steamer, the “Great Eastern,” for instance, built itself; that it set all its machinery in its beautiful and relative positions; and that on its own account, *ex proprio motu*, and in prosecution of its own designs, it starts into the ocean, ploughs into the teeth of the hurricane, laughs at the greatest waves, and drops its anchor in a few days in the new world? Is all this done by the vessel itself, and through its own volition, and for its own purposes, and for its own gaining ten, fifteen, or twenty per cent.? No sensible man would dream of such a thing; he would be a fool who should state that the “Great Eastern” built itself; and depend upon it, he is a greater fool who says that this world made itself. If this “Great Eastern” proves a ship-builder, if my watch proves a watchmaker, this world of ours proves with equal conclusiveness a world-maker. I ask the scoffer, who may deny the origin of the creation, and therefore cannot listen to the argument of the apostle—Who made the sun a sovereign amid all his subject orbs, and gave each orb its relationship, its impulse, its centripetal and its centrifugal force: each so beautifully adjusted that in harmony they revolve around him, all singing as they shine in our ears, if not in the deaf ears of the sceptic,

“The hand that made us is divine?”

Who gives to those gigantic orbs we look up to of a winter evening a precision in their vast revolutions, so exquisite, so perfect, that our finest chronometers are unable to appreciate and distinguish it? Do you know that if one of those orbs were to violate in an infinitesi-

mal degree its relationship to the parent sun—were any one of those orbs to forget its course, or to deviate from its orbit—world would crash against world, and orb impinge against orb, and universal ruin, ending in universal chaos, would be the necessity and the doom of all God's worlds? Can I for one moment suppose that this exquisite precision, this chronological accuracy, this fine adjustment, in comparison of which our best chronometers are toys and coarse playthings, is of itself and self-begotten—can I dream for a moment that these made themselves? No, no! Man can measure the orbits of the planets—he can weigh them—he can estimate their density; man can make the river and the sea his servants; he can make the red lightnings his messengers; he can turn God's works to his own good or to his own hurt; but man cannot make the river, he cannot stay the proud waves of the ocean; he cannot create worlds, he cannot assign them their spaces, he cannot inspire the sweet influences of Arcturus and the Pleiades. What, then, is our conclusion? That God made the world, and that the sentiment, or rather the statement of Peter, is only the echo of a fact transparent in every page of the whole universe—that there cannot be design without a designer—that there cannot be creation without a creator—that there cannot be a world without a world-maker. But suppose these scoffers were to deny this, and were to achieve what some have tried to do, overturn the beautiful inference of Paley—of design, and therefore a designer, and that designer God, we are able in recent times to go back to the great geological epochs, and to show that God has interposed as Creator, in our world, at least five successive times; and five times has created distinct and independent races

of living creatures. This is not a guess, nor is it mere fancy; it is the clearest and most irrefragable conclusion of the ripest investigation; five successive dynasties, each separated from the other by, if I might use the phrase, mountains of rock, masses of solid stone, and those created last having no connection with those created before them; the fossil remains of both remaining, and the evidence conclusive, if Genesis were expunged to-morrow, which it never can be, that God made heaven and earth. From the stony page alone we can trace the evidence that God made the world. Had the Spirit not written, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the ancient graves of races that have passed away open their stony lips, and proclaim trumpet-tongued in the listening ear of science, and through it to the ears of all mankind, there is a God, and that God has interposed as the Creator; and therefore Peter's statement is not simply based on Scripture authority, which to Christians is conclusive, but upon facts that the humblest inquirer can very easily take cognisance of. The argument of Peter, now, is irresistible; if God has interposed as Creator, God may interpose again as destroyer. If God had the power to make a world, God also retains the power to unmake the world He has made. When these scoffers say, "All things have continued as they were from the beginning," Peter replies, God made the earth; the power that made it surely is competent to unmake it; the watchmaker that connects the machinery of a watch has the power to destroy it; creative work is higher than destructive work. If then these scoffers were not wilfully ignorant they would learn this, that the God that made the worlds, and the earth standing out of the

water, and all things that we see, is able when, where, and how He may be pleased, to interpose to fulfil all He has said in the sequel of this chapter, where He tells us that the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works therein shall be burned up. Such and so logical is the apostle's first argument.

His second argument is drawn from a historical fact ; that historical fact the flood. Were I to assert the occurrence of the flood simply upon the authority of God's word, these sceptics might repudiate it ; because the same scepticism that refuses the promise of His coming would repudiate also the assertion in the Bible, that God made the heavens and the earth, or brought the flood upon it. But let me tell you, there are traces and evidences discoverable in some sources apart from Scripture of God's having caused that flood ; the fact which the apostle here employs as an argument and evidence that God will destroy the earth. There are evidences external to the Bible that the flood occurred. I at once admit, what geologists have fairly concluded, that there is not, as far as we have ascertained, a trace upon our earth of the flood of Noah. You may have noticed in all old books, books fifteen or twenty years old, when referring to the old occurrence of the flood, how they tell you of boulders being found which have been driven by surges and by convulsive waters, which must have been Noachian. They speak of shells, and remains of animals being found on the highest mountain tops as proofs of the deluge. It is now ascertained that not one atom of that demonstrates the occurrence of the flood. It is fact, and it is always right to admit what is so, for nothing can in the least touch or impugn the authority of the word of God, that there is not a

trace discoverable on the surface of the globe that such a thing as the flood occurred. This is very natural. The flood lasted only forty days; forty days' rain, or forty days' flood, however deep and wide spread, whether universal or limited, could not have left any very lasting trace upon the earth. And those shells and fossil remains, that have been quoted as proofs of the flood, are proofs of an era long antecedent to the existence of Adam; many of them are, perhaps, hundreds of thousands of years old. I do not know on what ground it is that Cuvier makes this remark: "If there be anything demonstrated in reality, it is this—that the surface of our globe has been the victim of a great natural revolution of which the date cannot go further back than five or six thousand years at the ~~very~~ utmost." I do not know the grounds on which he says so; but if on geological grounds, I fear it is not a tenable opinion. Another writer, a German, has made the remark that "it is impossible that the flood could have overflowed the earth." It may be fact, but it is no impossibility. Grant omnipotence as the capital to draw on, and I cannot see the impossibility. All things are possible with God except one thing—God cannot lie. And therefore to argue that it would require twenty-eight oceans to overflow the earth, is to forget that the Being who inspired the record of the fact had power to accomplish that fact, even from much less water than twenty-eight oceans. But a writer, whose authority for it I do not know, and therefore I quote it in this instance at second-hand, makes the remark that, "Further progress in mathematical knowledge has shown that the different seas and oceans contain forty-eight times more water than was supposed;" and he says, though I am not

exactly able to appreciate the grounds on which he says it—that, “Raising the temperature of the whole body of the ocean to a degree of heat a little greater than that in which small fishes live in the shallow seas between the tropics, would so expand the ocean as to produce at least the height over the whole globe stated by Moses to have occurred, namely, fifteen cubits above the highest mountains of Ararat.” But whatever be the value of these remarks, we give up altogether the argument that the earth bears any trace of a flood. We have another argument that we may adduce; and I adduce it simply to meet the sceptic, not to satisfy the Christian. He is satisfied with, “Thus saith the Lord.” There is no people existent upon earth, however pagan, superstitious, or ignorant, that do not retain in their traditional histories, as far as our researches extend, the memory of a great flood. A universal tradition, however distorted it may be, like driftwood floating on the ocean, indicates the occurrence of some gigantic shipwreck. For instance, Eusebius, the Greek historian, states that the history of the flood was read by him in his days—about the fourth century—in the pages of an Assyrian writer. A Greek writer, Lucian, states, that “the present race of men is not the original race, but that we are descended from Deucalion, who was preserved in an ark of wood from a universal deluge which destroyed the earth.” Varro, a Latin writer, mentions the flood as a landmark of history. It is also interesting that the Hindoo writings contain the history of the deluge. That remarkable incident the confusion of tongues is a proof of the deluge. Dr. Wiseman, the Roman Catholic Cardinal, a very able scholar though a very bigoted ultramontane Roman Catholic,

makes the remark in his book, "The Connection of Science and Revealed Religion," that all the languages of the world bear irrefragable traces of a common origin, but that all these languages have dislocations enough to indicate some great rupture in their history; such, he says, is the conclusion of the most eminent linguists of the world; the conclusion of science being simply the confirmation of the fact that after the deluge men tried to build a monument that should stave off all the future judgments of God; that He interposed by his mighty power, and split their common language into manifold dialects, the one unintelligible to the other; science thus proclaiming from its ripest pages, "Thy word, O God, is truth." This is the second external evidence that a flood occurred. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the Scripture argument, conclusive in a believer's mind. I turn to Peter's language, namely, that if God's power created a world, that power can destroy that world; if, in the second place, God's power overwhelmed a world, as in the instance of the flood, that power can overwhelm the world again. "The world that then was," he says, "perished." But what do we understand by this? Does it mean that he annihilated the world? No. The earth, we know, exists in its interior contents exactly as it existed in the days of Noah, or of Adam and Eve. Then what is meant by the expression "perished?" Its atmosphere was altered; the length of human life was lessened; probably the human frame became more obnoxious to disease; some great deterioration of our whole mundane economy took place, and this change he calls "perished." We have here an argument against those who say that when Christ comes and a fiery flood as predicted shall visit the earth with its terrific baptism,

the earth shall be annihilated. Peter says that just as the earth "perished" by the flood, so shall it perish by the last fire; but as when it perished by the flood it was not annihilated, so by parity of reasoning when it shall be consumed by the last fire, it shall only undergo a change; it shall not be annihilated. Then the apostle argues that if we grant this fact, that God made the earth to perish by a flood, you cannot deny his ability to cause the earth to perish by fire; and if He has expressly said that He will do so, we have from his creation a fact, and from the flood a precedent, that He is able, if He be willing, to fulfil all his threats and promises. God has not forsaken our world. God did not make the world, then retire into the chancel of the universe, and leave it to the influence of laws. "In God we live, and move, and have our being." Incidents lead to changes of dynasties—to the convulsion of nations, to the revolution of empires, to the alteration of the face of the whole earth. If you grant that God is not in the falling of a hair from an old man's head, I will demonstrate with irresistible force that he is not in the revolution of an empire, in the change of a dynasty, in the death of a king, or in the conclusion of the history of the globe itself. Deny God in things the most microscopic, and you must deny God in things the most magnificent. But we believe and are sure that the shadow of his presence sweeps the earth, that his echoing footsteps are heard by every listening ear and audible in every tongue; that he is in all the disturbing forces of our world; that he is in all the tiny rivulets of individual life, and in all the roaring cataracts of national convulsion; that there is nothing so small as to be beneath his inspection, nothing so vast as to

transcend his grasp or defy his control. If God originally made the world, if God has in fact once destroyed the world, if God is still present in the world, then the scoff, "Where is the promise of his coming?" is absurd; then the statement, "All things continue as they were," is false; then the inference that God is unable to fulfil his promise is illogical; then the argument that all things will continue as they are, because God is not able to make an alteration, is untenable.

But let us study the lesson itself. This reference to the flood proves one thing: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man cometh." The language is most striking as uttered by our blessed Lord, when he tells us, "they were eating," there was no harm in that; "they were drinking," if within limits of moderation there was no harm in that; "and marrying," there was no sin there; "and giving in marriage," there was no crime in that; "until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away. So shall it be at the coming of the Son of man;" that is, when the promise of His advent is fulfilled. In other words, it shows here that the condition of men at that day will not be only that of plunging into great sins, but that they will be so absorbed in things lawful that they will lose all appreciation of things heavenly and eternal. It is still true that more men are daily ruined by the excessive prosecution of what is lawful than by indulging in what is unlawful and sinful. As it was in the days of Noah, so, we are told, it will be before the Son of man cometh; some will be absorbed, thoughtless and unconcerned; and some, the apostle

tells us, will be scoffing; they will mock and despise every man that dares to announce the unpalatable truth. I have not the least doubt that previous to the flood overflowing the earth the philosophers of that day argued, and with most plausible rhetoric, The land and the water have never yet intermingled; we have never seen an instance of a flood overflowing the earth in which we live; all things according to our experience have continued as they are for two thousand years; why should we believe that stupid old fanatic Noah, and go into that ugly chest which he is building, sure to be dashed to pieces by the first roll of a mountain wave, or the first outburst of the fierce winds? All things continue exactly as they were since Adam and Eve were made; and no doubt all things will continue exactly as they are till at least, we have become rich, and have done with the world, and have left it to our successors. It will last our day. They were wilfully ignorant then; they despised the warnings of God. Such scoffers equally abundant now are wilfully ignorant also; and therefore they say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" It is a strange thing; men do not quarrel with the preacher who tells them of death, but they have a great dislike to the preacher who tells them of that day when the Lord shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and to be admired in all them that believe. Why is it so? The solution lies in the fact that whilst we are conscious that individually we must die, we all construct for ourselves a sort of posthumous existence, which keeps up the deception of a perpetuated life. We are prone to say, Well, if I must die, my children live; and if I must leave my estates, those estates will be given

to my children. Death you feel does not disturb this; wills, bequests, and family arrangements, all overcome this. But the idea that the funds will one day be extinguished; that the Royal Exchange will one day blaze as if it were paper or timber in the last fire; that one day all these things, castle, lands, hut, and palace, shall dissolve in the devouring flames; that we shall all stand either shivering or rejoicing at the judgment seat of Christ; that that day is not a dream in the infinitely remote perspective but a nearing certainty and that all things at least call aloud, "Be ye ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." This is what men do not like; this is what men cannot away with. The apostle predicts it will be so; our own experience shows that it may be so. But, you say, is there evidence that this day is proximately near? That I have to adduce afterwards. But is it not remarkable, to use the illustration under review, that the nearer the flood came the more specific and definite appeared the time when it should come? First a hundred and twenty years; then God tells Noah, "In seven days the flood shall come." Now may it not be that just as the light grew brighter the nearer that the judgment came then, the light will grow clearer the nearer that the event comes now. Have you ever noticed lamps lighted in a cathedral? First a lamp is lighted on a pillar at the western door, in the nave; then another lamp farther on; then a third lamp, then a fourth; you notice that not only does the space illuminated grow brighter, but that the dark space beyond becomes comparatively lighter also; until when all the lamps of the nave are lighted, and the altar candles also begin to blaze in the choir, the whole cathe-

dral is filled with light. It is so with prophecy. As one prophecy is fulfilled, and then another, and then another, not only does light become brighter on the past; but the dark and unfulfilled future that remains becomes more illuminated also; and we have a clearer, if not a certain idea of the day and the hour, or of the approximate time when all these things shall be fulfilled.

In conclusion, are we Christians? This is the great inquiry. What does it matter if in six, or ten, or twenty, or fifty years this world shall pass away like a scroll, and all its cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces crumble in the fervent heat; what does it matter to us if we be Christians? What did Noah care for the depth of the flood, the fierceness of the hurricane, the height of the giant waves? He was safe, not because the ark was strong but because the promise of his God was sure. So will it be with us; we are safe only in Christ, only in that ark built in heaven, and in which if we be now placed we shall pass through all the storms, and winds, and waves of this tempestuous world, and of that troubled era into which the world is plunging; and our ark will land us, not like Noah's upon the barren hills of Ararat, to go forth again upon a world depopulated and dismantled, but upon the everlasting hills of the heavenly Jerusalem; where may God grant we may be found at that day; for Christ's sake. Amen.

LECTURE III.

THE EARTH'S LAST BAPTISM.

The future condition of the earth and the process through which it will be introduced into its regeneration are clearly revealed. We are not left to guess. We have simply to read—

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”—2 PETER iii. 7.

OF the words of Peter the translation may be amended, and so amended be the more just to the original. The Rev. E. B. Elliot, author of the able work, the “*Horsæ Apocalyptiæ*,” remarks that these words ought thus to be literally translated:—“The heavens and the earth which are now are by the same word stored with fire, being reserved unto the judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” Just as the earth of old was stored with the waters, whose fountains broken up overflowed the earth, so by the same word the earth, now stored, treasured up, or charged with fire, is ready, when the repressive force is withdrawn, to burst forth, to burn up all things, and to cause the elements to melt with fervent heat. Let us here, also, mark

how truly science justifies—if, indeed, one may venture to use such a word, for we are sure the Bible is right—the words of God, or rather discovers by its own researches how accurately Scripture speaks when it refers to natural facts. A very eminent Christian geologist, Professor Hitchcock, makes the following remark :—

“Wherever in Europe and America the temperature of the air, water, rocks, in deep excavations has been ascertained, it has been found higher than the mean temperature of the climate at the surface, and experiments have been made in hundreds of places ; it is found that the heat of the earth increases rapidly as we descend below that point in the earth's crust to which the sun's heat extends. The mean rate of increase of heat has been stated by the British Association to be one degree of Fahrenheit's thermometer for every forty-five feet : at this rate all the known rocks in the earth would be melted at a depth of sixty miles.” This is the deduction of science. The instant you pass into the earth's crust beyond the reach of the sun's warming beams, you find that every forty-five feet you bore down the temperature increases by one degree of Fahrenheit's thermometer ; and the calculation is—not a calculation that is rash, but a certainty, I mean if there be any truth in reasoning by analogy—that, assuming the heat to rise one degree every forty-five feet you bore down, if you could bore down a depth of sixty miles—which is a very little bit of the crust of the earth compared with its diameter of 8000 miles—we should find everything we know, iron, copper, silver, gold, granite rocks, melted and reduced into liquid lava. Here is the illustration from science of what is stated here, that the earth is stored with fire. In fact, our earth is, in

plain words, a charged shell. We live upon the shell, that we call the crust ; we scratch that shell that it may produce a little cereal food for us and ours ; but the whole vast interior, for upwards of 7000 miles in diameter, and therefore 21,000 miles inside circumference, is all one vast ocean of molten rock, molten metal, liquid fire. All science shows, in the words of Peter, that the earth is charged, or stored, with fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Now, if this were merely the opinion of a Christian geologist, who is committed to great Christian truths, I would not lay such stress upon it ; but Sir Charles Lyell, one of the most eminent geologists of the age, in his "Principles of Geology," vol. ii. p. 451, without any reference to Scripture, makes the following striking remark : "When we consider the combustible nature of the elements of the earth, so far as they are known to us, and the facility with which their compounds may be decomposed, and enter into new combinations ; and also the quantity of heat which they evolve during these processes ; when we recollect that water is composed of two gases which by their union produce intense heat, we may be allowed to share the astonishment of Pliny that a single day passes without a universal conflagration." Now here are the words, not of one of those whom some newspapers would set down as fanatics, but the words of a calm, sober, dispassionate, and highly learned investigator of the laws and facts of nature and the universe ; and his feeling, drawn from facts, is that of surprise that a single day elapses without everything being wrapped in universal fire. Let us here adduce another statement. Gibbon, the sceptic, remarking upon this subject, says : "In the opinion of

a general conflagration the faith of the early Christians coincided with the philosophy of the Stoics and the analogies of nature." Schlegel, the eminent German historian and writer, says: "On various phenomena of earthquakes and volcanoes naturalists have concluded with reason that the volcanic basin of the earth's surface is somewhat deeper than the bottom of the sea." Elliot says, "The earth's form, an oblate spheroid, the crystallized character of the primitive rocks, the evident action of heat on the earlier strata, and the absence of organic remains, show us that at that time there must have been intense heat or fire in the centre, or the heart of the earth." Now all these things are simply illustrations taken from science, that the earth we now inhabit is what I have called it, a shell charged or stored with fire; and that the only reason why it does not explode, and involve a universal conflagration, is not man's management, but wholly God's repressive power; and, therefore, if He has said that one day it shall be burned up, we not only believe his word, but we can see what the fuel is, and where the fiery flood waits for his word; we can see that it is not only a possibility, but that the marvel is it does not sooner occur; and therefore that nothing but what Peter lays stress on—the word not being yet let loose—is the reason why the fiery flood does not break forth upon a guilty and an unbelieving world.

The next question we have to answer is, Are these words of Peter to be taken in their strict and literal signification? Unquestionably they are. If we study the language he employs, we find it is so definite and precise, it bears so visibly the aspect of history, not the pictures or the figures of a splendid romance, that common sense demands, what the ordinary reader will never

fail to accept, that it be taken in its strictly literal sense. The Flood was a literal and historic fact: and as this catastrophe is compared to it, we must assume that this last fire will be a literal occurrence also. A word overflowed the earth with water—that was literal; a word will overflow the earth with a fiery baptism—that must be literal also. But, at the same time, this fire, whatever be its action, does not necessarily imply, as some seem to infer, that the earth will be annihilated. The popular idea is that the earth is to be annihilated; that the words employed, which we shall ascertain the meaning of, denote that it is to be utterly burnt up, and to disappear like smoke from a furnace, and to be seen no more. But the truth is, fire annihilates nothing; philosophically there is no such thing as annihilation. That God that can create may have the awful prerogative of annihilating; but our experience—and we are reasoning against the scientific objections of scientific men, taken from experience—leads us to the conclusion that nothing can be annihilated. There is change of structure, there is decomposition and composition, decombination and combination; but we find no such thing as annihilation. The presumption, therefore, is that whatever be the effects of this fire, it will not annihilate. But we have stronger proof from the very words that are employed by the sacred writer. Peter uses the strongest expression to denote the effects of the flood; he says, “The world that then was perished;” but this cannot, and does not mean that it was annihilated; for, as matter of fact the flood subsided, the earth emerged, the rainbow spanned it, and Noah came down from Ararat to cultivate and inhabit it, and to promote its prosperity. So this fiery baptism is said not

to annihilate, but simply to destroy. "These things shall be *dissolved*; the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And then he says, in another passage, "Seeing all these things shall be dissolved." Now the Greek word translated *dissolve*, means to *unfasten*, to *unbind*, but it never means to *annihilate*; nay, that very word is applied to the ship in which Paul was wrecked; it is said it was dissolved, but that does not mean that the ship was annihilated, it was simply broken to pieces, its timbers shattered and shivered on the rocks, and by the force of the sea and the hurricane. In the same manner man's body is dissolved; it is laid in the grave, it is unfastened, dislocated, or dissolved; it becomes the subject of decay; but we are told that this mortal shall put on immortality, incorruptible shall put on incorruptibility; and that this same body, with all its characteristic identity, with all its idiosyncrasy, with all its peculiar and expressive features, shall be eliminated from the tomb, leaving nothing there but its sin, its imperfection, and decay; and that the very features that you recognise, and seeing which you say, my brother, my father, my husband, my wife; those very features shall emerge from the tomb sharply and clearly defined, and we shall know even as we are known. So will it be with this earth; it shall undergo a great change, but that change will not be annihilation. The very words that are here employed are, "A new heaven and a new earth," not another heaven and another earth, but only a new heaven and a new earth; just as we shall have not another body, but a new body; the *resurrection*, the rising again of that which was laid down, not the creation of something that was not. I therefore infer that

whatever be the effects of this fiery baptism, it will not annihilate the earth.

The language employed by St. Peter is, I admit, exceedingly strong; but we can form some ideas of it from experience and history. He says, in the tenth verse: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the things that are therein shall be burned up." Of something like this we have some slight experience or record. He says the heavens will pass away with a great noise. One can see how this must occur when this great conflagration shall overtake the world. Were the oxygen, which is an integral part of the atmosphere you breathe, to combine chemically with the hydrogen, which is an integral part of the water that you drink, separated from the ocean by the intense heat of a world on fire, the detonation or noise, the crashes and reverberations, would be something beyond all that ear has heard or imagination can possibly conceive. In other words, we see from science, that were such a conflagration to occur, the apostle's words, "pass away with a great noise," would prove to be not a piece of fancy in the portrait, but the just description of a literal and inevitable fact. We have evidence of this in such scenes as the following. Dana, an eminent American geologist, describes the eruption of a mountain in the South Seas. He says: "The lava rolled on sometimes sluggishly, sometimes violently. The lava swept away forests in its course, undermining and burying all the masses of rock and vegetation. Finally, it plunged into the sea with loud detonations; the burning lava, on meeting the waters of the ocean, was shivered like melted glass into millions of particles, which were thrown up

in clouds that darkened the sky, and fell like a storm of hail over the whole of the surrounding country." The "American Journal of Science," also describing the same scene, says: "The intense heat of the fountains and streams of lava caused an influx of cool air from every quarter. This created terrific whirlwinds, which constantly stalking about like so many sentinels bade defiance to these daring visitors." Read the account of an eruption of Vesuvius, or of Mount Etna, or of any volcanic mountain, which is a safety-valve to the liquid fire ocean that is in the interior of our globe, and you will thus have some idea, judging from a small scale, of what must be on a vast theatre magnificent beyond all imagination. Very awful, indeed, will be the crash of a dissolving earth, a detonating atmosphere, a world changing its form from that which is perishable into that which is imperishable.

To show still more clearly the exact science with which the apostle writes, I have to call attention to another fact, which appears to me very important in this age in which scientific men, at least some of them, fancy that they are infallibly right in some of their views, and that the Bible will not stand the test of science. Peter says, "The elements shall melt with fervent heat." Suppose that Peter had said merely, "The earth and the things that are therein shall be burned up," what would chemists and other men of science have inferred? They would have said, How ignorant Peter must have been of the contents of the globe! Why, we know that the earth has been the scene of terrific heat already; we know that the granite rocks are the result of it; they were once liquid. The granite of which the houses in Aberdeenshire are built, with which the streets of

London are paved, was once a liquid, molten mass ; and, therefore, when Peter says everything shall be burned up, the scientific man would say, Nonsense, for they have been burned already, and they cannot be burned up. But Peter does not say that ; he says, "The earth and the things that are thereon shall be burned up ;" but "the elements," the rocks, the metals, that have already been subjected to terrific heat, shall not be burned up, but "shall melt with fervent heat." So that Peter's words are scientifically and exactly correct. The heat will be so intense, that the granite shall be not burned up, but melted ; the metals will not evaporate, but will melt, just as it has occurred before in some of the great geological epochs, so it will occur again, only on a grander scale and in an intenser degree ; and the elements, the basis, the skeleton of the earth, shall I call it, that which is the very foundation of the earth, shall not only dissolve, but shall melt with fervent heat. Well, then, these very words, so scientifically correct, justify the inference I have already drawn, that the earth will not be annihilated. He says part of it will be molten, but not annihilated ; the ore will melt, the dross only will ascend like smoke, and disappear for ever ; this earth shall be disentangled of the curse that crushes it, for it was once holy, beautiful, prolific, happy ; but now it is under the curse, oppressed and groaning, longing, as the apostle says, to be emancipated or delivered. All sin, all curse, all thorn, all thistle, all poison, pestilence, plague, disease, deterioration that have penetrated or pervaded it will disappear ; and it will become, after its baptism, the most beautiful orb in the universe ; and it will be then proved, what one might indeed expect, that those grand historic spots,

the name of each of which is like a trumpet sound, the recollection of each of which cheers, and animates, and gladdens—Gethsemane, Nazareth, Calvary, the Mount of Olives, will never be destroyed; they are too precious; they will be crowned with a glory, if possible greater than that of old; and men will look down upon them from other orbs; and we shall go to them in troops of pilgrims, if pilgrims there will be, from the confines of the globe, and we shall look with admiration, fervent love, and holy worship, with thanksgiving, and with praise, upon those scenes once moistened by a Saviour's tears, once stained—no, I will not say stained—once consecrated by a Saviour's blood; and we shall feel how just, how wise, how good, how worthy, it was in God to perpetuate spots grander than battle-fields, more glorious than Marathon and Thermopylæ, and the scenes of the world's greatest victories; the spots where a Saviour was humbled, suffered, wept, died, and rose again. Now that this is a true and just view, I will show you again, by quoting one or two short remarks from divines who have written upon this subject. One of the most eminent theologians makes the following remarks upon this very passage: "It cannot be thought that what is here said respecting the burning of the world is to be understood figuratively, because the fire is here too directly opposed to the literal water of the flood to be so understood. It is the object of Peter to refute the boast of scoffers, that all things had remained unchanged from the beginning; and that, therefore, no day of judgment, and no end of the world could be expected; and so he says that originally, at the time of the creation, the whole earth was covered and over-

flowed with water, and that from hence the dry land appeared; and the same was true at the time of Noah's flood. But there is yet to come a great fire revolution: the heavens and the earth—that is, the earth with its atmosphere—are kept in store by fire until the day of judgment; at that time the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be melted with fervent heat, and everything upon the earth will be burned up; the same thing as that in verse 12. It will not be annihilation: for we expect a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness—that is, an entirely new habitation, a beautiful abode for man, to be built out of the ruins of his former dwelling-place, as the future habitation of the pious. This will be very much in the same way as a more perfect and immortal body will be from the body that we now possess." Tholuck, the eminent German evangelical divine, says: "The glorification of the visible creation is more definitely declared in Revelation xxi. 1, although it must be borne in mind that a prophetic vision is there described. Still more definitely do we find the fact of a transformation of the material world declared in 2 Peter iii. 7. According to Paul and the Revelation of John, the kingdom of God is placed upon the earth, in so far as this itself has part in the universal transformation. This exposition has been adopted and defended by most of the oldest commentators, for example, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Luther, and others. Luther says, in his lively way:—'God will make not the earth only, but the heavens also, much more beautiful than they are at present. At present we see this world in its working clothes; but hereafter it will be arrayed in Easter and Whitsuntide robes.'"

The late Dr. Pye Smith, a very eminent divine and geologist, says:—"I cannot but feel astonishment that any serious and intelligent man should have his mind fettered with the common, I might call it the vulgar, notion of a proper destruction of the earth. Some seem to extend the notion to the whole solar system, applied to the idea of an extinction of it, and reducing to nothing; and this notion has been general, and thus it has gained so strong a hold upon the feelings of many pious persons that they have made it an article of faith. But I confess myself unable to find any evidence for it in nature, reason, or Scripture; we can discover nothing like destruction of the matter of the universe, as subjected to our senses. Masses are disintegrated, forms are changed, compounds are decomposed; but not an atom is annihilated; neither have we a shadow of reason to assert that the mind, the seat of intelligence, ever shall or ever will be destroyed. The declaration in Scripture that the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and no more place be found for them, is undoubtedly figurative, and denotes momentous changes in the scenes of the Divine moral government. If it be the purpose of God that the earth shall be subjected to a total conflagration, we perfectly well know that the instruments of such an event lie close at hand, and wait only for the Divine volition to burst out in a moment. But that could not be a destruction, it would be a mere change of form; and no doubt it would be subservient to the most glorious results." Dr. Griffin, a very able divine, says: "A question arises whether the new heavens and the new earth shall be created out of the ruins of the old; that is, whether the old will be re-instated and restored in a more glorious form; or whe-

ther the old will be annihilated, and the new made out of nothing. The idea of the annihilation of so many immense and glorious bodies, organized with inimitable skill, and declarative of infinite wisdom, is gloomy and forbidding; indeed, it is scarcely credible that God should annihilate any of His works, much less so many and so glorious works. On the other hand, it is a most animating thought that this visible creation, which sin has marred, which the polluted breath of men and devils has defiled, and which very soon (by sin) will be reduced to utter ruin, will be restored by our Jesus, will arise from its ruins in tenfold splendour, and shine with more illustrious glory than before it was defaced by sin. After a laborious and anxious search, I must pronounce the latter to be my decided opinion; and the same I believe has been the common opinion of the Christian fathers and divines of the Reformation, and of the critics and annotators who have since flourished. The same word is used to express the ancient destruction of the world by the flood, when certainly it was not annihilated."

Thus the opinion I have ventured to state—an opinion that is sure to be made the butt of sarcasm, satire, and ridicule by sceptical minds—is not without foundation in science, is certainly not without a basis in Scripture; and I submit, if the opinions of the great and the good of all past generations are to weigh one straw, these opinions and these interpretations are all on my side. I will show in my next lecture that the belief that the old earth and the old heavens are to evolve into a new material earth with risen, rational, living embodied souls, or regenerate men, is also the judgment of the wise, the good, and the great; in short of men, at whose feet we may sit, and from whose lips we may

learn, as thousands have learned before, the words of everlasting life. All of the earth that the devil has introduced will be handed over and made a present to him again; he will get his own, and God will retain his. There is a Collect in the Church of England Service—in which there are many very beautiful ones—which begins thus: “O God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made.” Whatever God made, the devil has been permitted to mar, but he will not be permitted to annihilate or to appropriate. Whatever, therefore, Satan has introduced into the works of God that Satan will be welcome to again. The very words of Scripture justify this conclusion. We read that “death and hades”—“death and the grave,” for that is the meaning,—“were cast into the lake of fire; and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Here, then, we have an express declaration of a fire into which the fruits of sin and Satan are to be cast; and we read afterwards that the beast and the false prophet were also cast into the lake of fire; “the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet; these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with fire and brimstone.” Therefore, we infer that the last fire shall receive Satan and his angels, for it is prepared for them; and that it shall consume all that they have introduced by way of infection into this world of ours; but nothing that God has made shall continue for ever marred, or shall be for ever destroyed or seized, and held by Satan, the wicked one. These inferences are based upon grounds that are irrefragable; and we may now say, seeing all these things must be dissolved, let us not fix our affections here. Why fix your heart upon a flower that must soon fade? why

centre your affections among things that must soon be exhausted? If the earth is our all, and our hearts are in it, and on it, and our whole cares and anxieties centre about it, then we are identifying ourselves with Satan, and Satan's things; and with these we must go into the lake of fire. But if our hearts soar above it, if the wings of the affections clip and rise to loftier realms and inspire onward to brighter days: if we set our affections not upon things that are temporal, but upon things that are spiritual; that is, not exclusively, for that cannot be, but supremely, for that ought to be; then, when the earth and all that is therein shall be burned up, we shall not be touched. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked upon the floor of the sevenfold heated furnace, and not a portion of their hosen garments was singed, not a hair of their heads touched. And when that dread explosion shall take place, and the earth and all the things that are in it shall be burned up; and its metals, and its granite, and its whole structure shall melt with fervent heat; it can no more touch a Christian—and there is nothing impossible in that, for we have precedents that show there is nothing improbable in it—than life, or death, or height, or depth, or any other creature, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

LECTURE IV.

THE GREAT RESTORATION.

The last fire will purify, not annihilate; its action on the earth will be beneficial as well as judicial.

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 PETER iii. 13.

THE apostle does not say, we look for *another* "heavens and *another* earth," but "a *new* heavens and a *new* earth;" even as at the resurrection we look for not another body, but a new body, in which the present soul shall live in felicity and joy for ever. I desire to show in this Lecture that the scene in which man fell is the very scene on which man shall be restored; that the "future rest of the people of God," to use the language of Dr. Chalmers, "is a heaven of sense, though not a heaven of sensuality." By the confession and admission of all, our world is not now as it once was, not certainly as it should be; and we believe it is not as one day it will be. God made only what was beautiful and good; whatever of evil has come into our earth is an intrusion, not from God, but from a very different and opposite source. Every one who looks back at his experience,

or looks around him in the world, must infer that things are not as they were in Eden, nor as they are predicted to be. What land is not scarred with graves? what soil is not cursed with thistles? what nation has not been torn by war? what country's annals are not some of them written in the blood of hearts once warm, and with the tears of weeping eyes? what air is not tainted by disease, or made the vehicle of epidemics, or infected more or less by miasma? what race is exempt from headaches, or if exempt from headaches, from what is perhaps much worse, heartaches? Who has not seen or felt wasting sickness, death, tears, sorrow, bereavement, trial? In what part of the world do we not find the covetous always grasping, the oppressor always crushing, the tyrant ever seeking to subdue by force or the priest by fraud. Where are not the poverty-stricken, the oppressed, the slave? Crimes and misfortunes career on every wind of heaven and on every current of the air; and all history, and all experience, and all just reasoning, go to prove that something has gone wrong with our world. If a watch does not go truly, you say there is something the matter with it; if a machine halts in its action, you say there is something wrong. Why should we not apply the same law to our world? It does not go right—it is not in a state of optimism—the most sanguine cannot help admitting. I do not say it is all cloud, for there are many incidental gleams of sweet sunshine; I do not say it is all desert, because there are spots kissed by the sunbeams and freshened by the soft dews that are truly beautiful. These are the memorials of a beauty that has perished; but, thank God, the earnest and the promises of a beauty that shall be restored again. Well, looking at the world in its pre-

sent state, we must allow it is not all as we could desire. It seems, however, universally agreed by Christians, whether they concur in the opinions and conclusions I have tried to establish or not, that there is a good time coming; that a day will break upon our world when the curse shall be removed, when sin shall be exterminated, when all shall be righteous, and men shall bless the Redeemer, and all shall be blessed in Him; when there shall be no more tears, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor death; when the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation shall cease to be prophecy by being actualized in literal and joyous fact. The question remains, however, Where is this change to be? What is to be the seat of all this? Dr. Chalmers, the celebrated John Wesley, almost every evangelical divine (Whitby excepted), believe what I am going now to try to establish—that the seat of the curse shall be the scene of the blessing—that where sin has triumphed, there grace shall erect its trophies—that the very scene of Satan's momentary success shall be the very field of Satan's entire and total disaster—that this earth, in other words, transformed, regenerated, purified, through the last fiery baptism from which it shall emerge, will be the sweetest nook of heaven, the most delightful spot in God's restored universe, the place where you and I shall dwell, on which there shall be no graves, whose air shall vibrate with no crying, whose sods shall neither be moistened by tears nor broken for the dead, and where there shall be no separation for those to whom now there is no condemnation. I look forward to it as a glorious epoch, when on the grave the resurrection morn shall break, when the withered branches of nature shall blossom like the very rose; when the earth, long de-

posed and debased, long groaning and moaning like a stricken thing under a curse that she did not provoke, but which we brought upon her, shall be emancipated from her oppression, reinstated in her ancient orbit, recrowned with more than Eden beauty, and be lovelier, as it will be vastly more lasting, than that world which came from the plastic hands of Deity, and on which He pronounced the words, "All is very good." Let us try to adduce the grounds on which we build this conclusion. First of all I will show that perfect holiness, perfect joy, perfect heaven on earth we have had already in precedent. What I ask, was ancient paradise? Turn to Eden, read the story of it; for we may there infer that the Genesis of Moses shall be the regenesi*s* of St. John in the Apocalypse. What was ancient Eden? Man holy, happy, at peace with himself, at peace with all that was about him; the Divine image emblazoned in heavenly beauty on his brow; Divine love the very atmosphere he breathed, and Divine light his sunshine; all sounds harmony, all sights beauty! not a sere leaf in Eden; not an instance of death, nay, not even the knowledge of what death meant; every flower looking up to him its lord, and ministering to him its tints of beauty, its fragrance, and its perfume; the lion and the lamb lying down in harmony and happiness together, and all of them looking up to man as their lord, he holding the reins of creation in his hand, bidding the lion go, and he went; and the tiger lie down, and he lay down; the impression of his lordship on all. All was brightness above; all was verdure, and flower, and beauty below—everything a perfect reflection of heaven. Where did this take place? On this very earth—on the choicest spot of this very globe. What have we

there? A perfectly holy man, and a perfectly holy woman, and a perfectly happy home, and a perfectly peaceful orb; no hurricane disturbing its air, no grave scarring its virgin soil, no pollution or poison distilling on it. Here is fact. What has been may be; if this was once, I ask, why may it not be again? But, you say, this ceased. Of course it did; but that was not God's doing but man's undoing. A great curse fell upon its centre, and like a blot of ink upon the sensitive blotting paper radiated out from the centre to the utmost circumference. The poetess, Mrs. Barrett Browning, beautifully represents Eve when she ran a fugitive from Paradise, carrying one of Eden's fairest roses in her hand, fresh, fragrant, beautiful; but just as she passed the margin and emerged from the gate of Paradise, she found its petals begin to fade, and its leaves to wither; and in her all but innocence she marvelled what could be the matter with this fair and lovely Eden rose. The poet thus describes the change that passed upon all things. What do we find in the record of the change? The serpent cursed above all beasts of the earth, the rest of living creatures cursed with him; the woman cursed also, and her curse perpetuated in her distinctive sorrow; man doomed to fertilise the barren earth with the tears of his weeping eyes and the sweat of his aching brain; earth producing thistles, and thorns, and briers, where roses once grew; and man doomed to eat of the product of his toils with sorrow till he returns to the dust from which he was taken.

Having seen the beauty and the blessedness that once were, and having seen what we feel the curse that fell upon all, let us turn to prophecy, allusive to the past in its pictures of the future. There every item of the

curse is predicted in prophecy to be reversed ; and as the curse fell here, the prophecy that speaks of the reversal of the curse implies that that reversal will take place here also. Let us gather what is said. "There shall be no more curse ;" that means, on earth ; "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose. The wilderness shall be a fruitful field ; the wolf and the lamb shall feed together ; the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them." What we read in ancient prophecy, we find in the words of history, "He laid hold of that old serpent, the devil, and bound him a thousand years." Then we read, "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." We read, again, "God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes ; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain." Here you will notice that every part of the curse denounced at the fall upon the earth is word for word reversed, and exchanged for a lasting and a glorious blessing. We infer therefore that Paradise lost shall merge into Paradise regained ; that the desert created by the curse shall become the garden of the Lord beneath the blessing ; that as with the first Adam all fell, and all nature was transposed, so with the return of the second Adam, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, all shall be put right, restored, and perpetuated for ever and ever. The eighth Psalm is a striking picture of this, where David says, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son

of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion"—here is the picture of Adam in Paradise—"over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Let us now take the inspired commentary upon this, as that commentary is given by the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the second chapter, at the sixth verse, "One in a certain place"—that is, David—"testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For," says the apostle, "in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Now what is the parallel? Between the first Adam, constituted lord of all; the loss of his sovereignty, all things breaking loose from his grasp; and Christ, the second Adam, made lord and king again, and all things not yet put under him as a fact, but put under him as a right, and to be put under him as a fact when he returns again to reign, Redeemer, King, Creator. Such is the first picture of millennial blessedness in ancient Eden; such is the evidence of a state of perfect holiness and happiness actualized on earth; such was the catastrophe that over-

took it, and such, too, the predicted reversal, jot by jot, curse by curse, calamity by calamity, when Christ shall come, and the earth shall be filled with his glory, and all things shall be made new; and a second Paradise shall overspread the world, vastly more beautiful as it will be vastly more enduring than that which sunk like a garden in an earthquake and passed away.

Then we have another proof of something of the same kind in the miracles of Jesus. What did Christ's miracles imply? That much in the moral and material world had gone wrong. What was the result of each? The rectifying, so far, of what had gone wrong. Each miracle of Christ was not merely an act of power, it was also a redemptive and restorative act; it was an instance, on a microscopic scale, of what he will one day create on a magnificent and universal one. Take any one miracle that He performed; the diseased came to Him, He rebuked the disease, the sufferer was instantly made well. The demon-possessed soul appealed to Him: He spoke the word, and the demon rushed from the man, and herded with the swine, and perished in the ocean. He spoke to the blind, and their eyes were opened; to the deaf, and their ears were unstopped; and standing by the margin of the grave, where sin had achieved its mightiest triumph on earth, He said, "Lazarus, come forth." The tide of life returned and rushed into every vein, and the heart beat again with the pulse of conscious happiness, and peace, and joy. In Adam the sight became blindness, hearing deafness, life death; in Christ, the second Adam, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised. By the sin of the first Adam all nature was disturbed; the brutes rose in insurrection; the winds burst forth in

fury ; the waves rolled against the land. In Christ, the second Adam, the lion lies down with the lamb. "He was," says Mark, "with the wild beasts in the desert;" famine disappears, and there is plenty ; the winds hear his voice, and, like obedient children, lie down ; and He lays his majestic hand upon the ocean's waves, and it forms itself into a promenade for his royal feet. You have, then, in the second Adam the reversal of all the calamities superinduced by the first Adam : and a type, an earnest, on a small scale, of what will be on a large and universal one when He returns again. We have also an evidence of the same possibility in the resurrection of the body. What is said of it ? "This mortal shall put on immortality ; this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility." Now I do not see any more difficulty in believing that I shall live on a holy earth, and breathe a holy atmosphere, than in believing that I shall live in a material body, and that material body as pure and perfect as an angel in heaven. Therefore I believe not only of the body but of the earth, that this mortal earth shall put on immortality ; this corruptible earth shall put on incorruptibility ; and then shall be brought to pass that saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory ; O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?" And very cautious, too, and very studied, are the words of the Psalmist ; for what does he say ? "Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, the heavens are the work of thy hands ; they shall perish ;" the same word that Peter applies to the earth under the action of the flood, "The world that then was perished ;" "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure." Now mark what follows : "Yea, all of them shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou

change them, and they shall be changed ;" not annihilate them, and they shall be annihilated ; but, " change them, and they shall be changed."

We have also illustrative instalments of what is to be in the triumphs of modern science. I think God is just as much in providence as he is in the New Testament ; the facts of providence are as instinct with Deity as the texts of the Bible are inspired. God is not a being shut up in a Bible, or enclosed in a church ; He is in all heights, in all depths : in all the eddies and currents of individual story ; in all the roaring cataracts and convulsions of national or European life. Now what do we find taking place in the world ? Steadily man gaining the mastery over that world which gained the mastery over him. I do not say, mind you, that that is the way or the process by which Paradise is to be brought back ; but it seems highly probable, that, lest man should despair of that bright prospect, and of the fulfilment of that grand prophecy, God gives him now and then proofs of the possibilities that lie hidden in nature, all waiting for his royal will and kingly signal to bring them forth, and to transfigure earth into all the blessedness of heaven. Take, for instance, the powers of medicine. Since Jesus healed the sick, medicine as an art has made astonishing progress. We lament over its defects, we sometimes complain of the inadequacy of its results ; but there is no doubt that medicine in 1860 has attained a progress and risen to a success unprecedented in any former epoch ; and some diseases under its action, or its prescriptions, or its management, have almost ceased from the experience of mankind. How should we regard this ? God giving us a little earnest, a little foretaste, of that day when

there shall be no more sickness, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor crying. Let us next turn to the achievements of science; still more wonderful. What was man's power in Paradise? Power over all sheep, all oxen, the earth, the air, the water, everything. What did man lose in Paradise? His jurisdiction; the crown fell from his head; a sinner, he was deposed. What do we see taking place? Man seizes the water, and makes it carry him across the land and across the ocean; in the locomotive in the one case, and in the ocean steamer in the other. And, as if to show how steadily he gains his victories, he has seized the red lightnings, yoked them to his chariot, made them his messengers; and that red lightning, thought to be the one unmanageable thing in God's universe, has been tamed by the genius of man, and made to convey messages that shake thrones, that alter dynasties, that arrange the nations of the earth, or convey sweet tidings of joy, or consolation, or comfort, or peace, to those that are afar off, and are desolate and oppressed. What are all these but earnest of what the apostle calls the restitution of all things, foretokens of what shall be; proofs that there are latent possibilities in the earth of a condition of things of which we have little experience; the last manifestation of which was in Paradise, and the next will be on earth and in Paradise again? In the words, then, of Dr. Chalmers, who writes a splendid sermon, well worth your reading, upon this very subject: "We believe in a future paradise of sense; but not in a future paradise of sensuality." He complains, in that excellent sermon, that Christians lose all idea of heaven as an inspiring hope because they think of it as some mystical, transcendental, inconceivable, metaphysical thing in the far-off space of the universe,

which they neither understand, nor care to enjoy, nor long to possess.

If this is to be, if this condition of things is to crown the world's history, who can look forward to it except with emotions of joy? You find that people, when you tell them of the scenes that begin to loom up from beneath the horizon, when you try to solve some of the chronological dates that indicate "a thousand years as one day, and one day as a thousand years," as stated in this chapter; and when you show to them that the great epochs of ancient prophecy, whatever be their significance or whatever be their issue, are almost exhausted, are horrified, they are shocked. But what are they shocked at? Shocked to think that there shall be no more graves, no more tears, no more sorrow, no more crying; shocked at the hope of all broken circles reunited, of all separations ceased, of death destroyed, of the grave filled up; and of heaven's eternal sunshine sleeping in its softness and its beauty upon the bosom of a restored and an adoring earth. I see nothing to be shocked at; and if it were to come to-morrow, it would be a blessed change. But the reason why men are shocked is, their hearts are so set upon their gains, their ambition, their avarice, their prospects, their estates, that they cannot bear to think that all will go. But one day it must; whether soon or late, it is certain; and the word of God constantly says: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;" just when men think not. One would suppose, now, that the very uncertainty of it would be a more shocking thing than the positive certainty, if that certainty could be positively ascertained. "But we, according to his promise," do not lament all this, but, "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Now what is the promise? The promise is contained in the prophet Isaiah, in the sixty-fifth chapter—a promise which he delineates at great length, and in which, I admit, there are difficulties that I cannot explain; but people should not say, because everything predicted is not fully understood, that, therefore, we understand nothing. If it were as plain as the past, it would not be prophecy. In the sixty-fifth of Isaiah, at the seventeenth verse, we have the promise to which Peter alludes; and there, also, the germ of that new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. “For, behold,” saith the Lord, “I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind;” that is, the last shall so eclipse in magnificence the first that the first shall no more be recollected or thought of. “But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create;” not be terrified, shocked, and amazed, and then scoff, and call it nonsense; but when you see the promise marching from the skies to actualize itself in facts and phenomena upon earth, “be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” Now the next verse, the twentieth, is beset with difficulty; I cannot explain it: I will search for more information; and when I discover it—for I am but a learner—I will then tell you the result. “There shall be no more thence an infant of days;” I can understand that—there will be no infancy; “nor an old man that hath not filled his days,” that is, here shall be no old age; I can quite understand that. But then the difficulty is in the last part; “for the

child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." I do not understand that, because I am told there is to be no more crying, no more death, no more sorrow; and yet I read in this clause of death and of sin. How to reconcile these two perplexes me; I have not the least doubt there is reconciliation; and it is only my ignorance, not the Spirit having erred, that is the cause of what seems dissonance and discordance. The rest of the prophecy seems to me very plain. "They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." Why, Adam was not a lazy enjoyer of the happiness of Paradise: in his innocence he was appointed to till the ground; and I cannot see any evil in labour; evil is in fatigue, in exhausted brains, in exhausted muscles, in too long hours, the great besetting sin of this great capital of ours, in excessive toil. But labour is delightful, exertion is stimulus; and we are so constituted that when a man becomes lazy, instead of enjoying himself, he gradually lapses into disease, decay, and death. Then it is said, "They shall not build, and another inhabit." I can understand that; that is, there will be no spoil, no plunder. "They shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people." That seems to indicate protracted age. Some of the cedars of Lebanon which existed in the days of our Lord are supposed to be standing warring with the elements of heaven upon Mount Lebanon at this moment. It is also said that some of the olive trees of Gethsemane are still standing. They say that they are either the very trees or the children of the trees on which the eye of the Man of Sorrows looked. And then he says in the twenty-fourth verse: "And it shall come to pass, that before they

call I will answer." What a striking illustration of that is found in the electric telegraph! As soon as it is laid down between America and Britain, which, of a dead certainty, it will be, we shall get an answer to our question almost before the question is transmitted, owing to the difference of longitude. The electric wire seems to me from its capacities the only living illustration of this; "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Finally, he crowns this beautiful Eden picture, to be reproduced upon earth, with these words: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." There is the promise. With respect to the last verse, physiologists feel a difficulty; they say it is impossible that the lion shall eat straw like the ox. Everybody who has studied the merest alphabet of physiology knows that a graminivorous animal—the ox and the sheep, that live upon grass—has a physical organization very different, I mean in visceral extent, from the organization of the carnivorous animal. Man's physical organization indicates that he is to be both graminivorous and carnivorous. But the lion is not made to eat grass; his tusks, his claws, his inner visceral structure, all indicate that he is carnivorous. But the ox, again, is just as plainly, from his teeth, from his visceral structure, from his whole enonomy, meant to eat grass. Then they say, How can this be realized? I answer that by asking another question: How did God do with them in Paradise? He made them there; there was no death or destruction of animals in Paradise; animal flesh was not used by man till after the Flood; some way they

must have existed in Paradise ; and He who made them exist in harmony, and live without destroying each other, can do so again. But it has been remarked by Christian physiologists that the lion and the tiger, not, as Matthew Henry, if I mistake not, has said, suddenly became carnivorous by the Fall ; this, I think, is untenable ; but that God made them with a prospective reference. The fall of man was not an unforeseen event that overtook God's world, and for which he had made no provision ; it was assumed as a certain fact, and by an anticipatory arrangement He made our economy with the prospect of that disaster plainly and clearly before Him ; and that these animals were so constituted then with a prospective reference to a condition which sin would introduce, and in which they would have to play a part.

Here, then, we have a promise. Now, says the apostle, we look for that promise ; we look for it in the attitude of hope. What are a Christian's two grand graces ? Faith, that in retrospective exercise rests upon a cross ; and hope, that in prospective feeling rests upon a crown. To show you that it is not merely the Bible, nor merely Christian teachers that hold this sentiment, I will read to you a few lines from the finest of English poets—I mean Cowper—who thus describes, in words of glowing beauty, what I have attempted imperfectly to set forth. He says :—

“ At the day of God

The groans of Nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages, have an end ;
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp,
The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have wellnigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world ; and what remains

Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm; that rocks itself to rest;
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath moved him and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious in his chariot paved with love;
And what his storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.
Behold the measure of the promise filled;
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase.

“From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see.
Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee King, and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee King; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent, long desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The lion, and the leopard, and the bear,
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade.
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man

Lurks in the serpent now ; the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue."

And Pollok, another fine poet, thus sings :

• The animals, as once in Eden, lived
In peace. The wolf dwelt with the lamb, the bear
And leopard with the ox, with looks of love,
The tiger and the scaly crocodile
Together met, at Gambia's palmy wave.
Perched on the eagle's wing, the bird of song,
Singing, arose, and visited the sun ;
And with the falcon sat the gentle lark.
The little child leaped from his mother's arms,
And stroked the crested snake, and rolled unhurt
Among his speckled waves, and wished him home ;
And sauntering schoolboys, slow, returning, played
At eve about the lion's den, and wove
Into his shaggy mane fantastic flowers.
To meet the husbandman, early abroad,
Hasted the deer, and waved its woody head ;
And round his dewy steps the hare, unscared,
Sported and toyed familiar with his dog !"

Thus poets try to picture what prophets have sung
We look, then, for the close of this troubled and tempestuous state of things. We look for a new heaven and a new earth ; and our hearts should rejoice, and look for it with joy ; we shall pray, " Thy kingdom come ;" and when that cry shall rise in one fervent prayer from the depths of earth, that kingdom shall come, in an hour when the world thinks not, but it will not overtake you as a thief, for you are the children of the light ; and when Christ comes, yours will be an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

LECTURE V.

SUMMER NIGH AT HAND.

This winter state of the world will have its spring and its everlasting summer. Its hopes are hidden, not lost.

“ Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees ; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”—LUKE xxi. 29—31.

THE words spoken by our Lord concerning the fig-tree were spoken in the spring-time, the eve also of that season which saw finished, and accessible to all, the great salvation, in consequence of the sacrifice and death of the Son of God, the lawgiver, in the room of the law-breaker ; “ He spake to them a parable ; Behold the fig-tree and all the trees ; when they now shoot forth”—that is, they are now budding at this season, and these buds are the prophets of approaching summer. To these He appeals as phenomena in nature, and consecrates them to be prophets in their measure of that kingdom that is yet to come.

Let us try, in the following explanatory remarks, to answer the question, What is the kingdom here that was not then come, but was yet destined to be set up ?

and secondly, What is the meaning of the spring buds of the fig-tree, as either prophecies or prefigurations of the kingdom still to be?

We read constantly throughout the gospels of "the kingdom of Christ," "the kingdom of heaven," "the kingdom of God." These expressions are used in two distinct though related significations. There is, first, the kingdom which is inner, the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, or the reign of grace in each individual heart; that reign the creation and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. But there is, secondly, beyond that, a kingdom in some degree independent of it, and to some extent disconnected with it also, for the advent of which we constantly pray, "Thy kingdom come." We do not pray, thy kingdom already come be increased and expanded more and more; but distinctively, "May thy kingdom come, a descent from above perfect and complete." This last kingdom is, doubtless, alluded to here—that future kingdom, with all its unfolded glories, all its magnificent and imperishable characteristics, into which shall be absorbed and glorified the kingdoms of this world, as they become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, when He shall reign for ever and ever. We never shall rightly understand the allusions scattered over the gospels until we associate with them the germs of them, as these bud in the prophecies of ancient days. Those phrases that seem to us strange in the New Testament become plain as we read them, not in the independent light of the age in which we live, but in the reflected light of the Old Testament scriptures. On turning to the prophet Daniel, we shall find a description of four great universal empires or kingdoms that

have existed upon earth—the kingdom of Babylon, the first universal empire; the kingdom of the Medo-Per-
 sian; the kingdom of the madman of Macedon, Alex-
 ander the Great; and the fourth great empire, more
 fierce, terrible, powerful, and geographically larger than
 them all, the Roman empire. These four kingdoms
 were the only universal empires that ever were erected
 upon earth, or ever will rise in the future history of the
 world. Most great conquerors, from Charlemagne down
 to Napoleon the First, seem always to have had one
 grand, burning ambition—to erect upon earth a fifth
 universal empire. Every effort has proved abortive, and
 every future experiment must be a failure. It is said
 this ambition burns at this moment in one bosom in
 Europe. Charlemagne and the great Napoleon failed
 in far more favourable circumstances. An empire, ab-
 sorbing all into one great sovereignty, and bowing all
 under the jurisdiction of one common lord, would be a
 curse were it a possibility. But whether such design
 be entertained or not, you may rest assured there is no
 success for it. The next great universal kingdom will
 neither be German, nor French, nor English; it will
 be that kingdom which is described by Daniel, after he
 has portrayed the preceding universal kingdoms that
 have passed away, when he tells us, at the close of the
 seventh chapter, and after the judgment sits upon the
 last of the four great kingdoms:—"And the kingdom"
 —now there is the next kingdom—"and the kingdom
 and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under
 the whole heaven"—under heaven, that is, upon earth—
 "shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most
 High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and
 all dominions shall serve and obey him." This fifth

+ The Monarchy of St. Charles is the
 Descent, called the fifth kingdom,
 but it is a false prophecy. J. 1871

kingdom, of which Christ is to be the personal king—personally revealed when He comes in the clouds, of which the subjects will be redeemed and risen Christians—is that kingdom, the presignificant signs of the approach of which are here given. It is after He had told them that Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot, that they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory; that He then proceeds to point out to the church of all ages and of all space, by what signs they should judge of the nearness or the remoteness of its approach, illustrating his meaning by buds of spring, the prophets of the then approaching summer, the dawn of that glorious sunrise in which the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be the kingdom of our God and of his Christ.

Let us try to ascertain if this distinction between the kingdom of grace that is, and the kingdom of glory that is to be, is really recognized throughout Scripture. "God hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;" here is the existing kingdom of grace. We do not deny the existence of this, or refuse to accept it as a blessed and precious present personal possession; but we allege that this future kingdom is not simply to contain the hearts of Christians, but their bodies also; that the subjects of this kingdom are the risen bodies as well as the regenerated souls of all believers. It is that kingdom of which Jesus speaks when He says, "The righteous shall shine forth as the brightness of the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever." The kingdom of grace is already come; the kingdom of glory is yet to come. The first is the sweet spring bud, fragrant, beautiful, suggestive of joy, and hope, and

*+ Resurrection progress. The buds
of spring! —*

happy association; the latter is the full, ripe fruit, fragrant and amaranthine. The gospel is not the kingdom; it is "the gospel of the kingdom"—literally, the good news of the kingdom. We are not yet possessors of this kingdom—we are the heirs of it. An heir is not a possessor; and therefore, though not yet the possessors of the kingdom, we are the heirs of it; and therefore the right and the relationship are ours, and in due time the estate and the inheritance will be made over to us. There are two passages that have somewhat perplexed those who have arrived at this conclusion; one is in the 17th of St. Luke, where our Lord says: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The translation given in the text cannot be correct, because the marginal reading, which is in every instance the better rendering, is, "*The kingdom of God is among you;*" and, secondly, the kingdom of God could not be within the hearts of those He addressed, for they were Pharisees; and he had called these very Pharisees, "Ye generation of vipers, ye serpents, ye children of the wicked one." How could He say to such, "The kingdom of God is in your hearts?" They were total strangers to it. As these words were addressed to the Pharisees, it is plain that the kingdom of grace was not in their hearts. The meaning must be, "*The kingdom of God is among you.*" In what sense it was among them, whether preached among them, made known among them, is left unstated: all we are sure of is, it was not here stated by our Lord that the kingdom of God was in the hearts of the men He addressed; and, therefore, to quote this text to prove that the kingdom of grace is within the heart, and to dispose of the conclusion that

the kingdom of glory is to come, is to misquote and misapply the passage. The other passage, about which some difficulty has been felt, is in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, at the 28th verse, where it is said, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." It is utterly impossible to allege, or at least to prove, that this describes or refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. Would any one say that when Titus and Vespasian marched under the Roman eagles, to lay siege to Jerusalem, such was the Son of man coming in his kingdom? In any shape, or in any sense, could it be said that the Son of man came then with power and great glory? Certainly not. Then what does the Redeemer intend when He says, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Unquestionably, it relates to what instantly and immediately transpired—the bright glimpse of the kingdom which crowned with its glory the top of Mount Tabor. Our Lord ascended the mount accompanied by three apostles; Elijah and Moses appeared with him also: and there was an aureole of glory, transient, indeed, but beautiful, kindled from the heavenly rest, which was a glimpse of the glory to be revealed—an epitome, as it were, on a small scale, of that kingdom which shall absorb all the kingdoms of this world, and whose glory shall be so great, that it shall have no need of the sun nor of the moon, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. There is nothing in the way of the conclusion with which I started—that this kingdom, the tokens of which our Lord states, and the prophecies of

whose approach he gives in succession, is the kingdom which is yet to come ; the subjects of which will be all the risen and the changed at that day, regenerated, justified, and washed and saved. This kingdom was set up in Paradise ; it surrounded a tree of life there ; it perished and passed away like a vision, leaving behind it only the memorials of its lost magnificence. But we read in the Apocalypse—for the Bible completes the circle—that the kingdom shall return, that the tree of life shall again be in the midst of the Paradise of our God. Now, we are told in the New Testament, Jesus sits with the Father on his throne, but then He shall sit on the throne of his own glory ; now He sits at the Father's right hand, till He makes his enemies his footstool ; then there shall be given unto Him glory, and dominion, and a kingdom, and all nations, peoples, and languages shall serve Him. From all these premises I do not rashly infer that, whilst we accept the kingdom of grace as a blessed inner, living reality in the depths of each individual's regenerated heart, we are not satisfied with it, as if it were the full complement of all that God has told us ; we still look for a kingdom, just as we look for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God.

Let us try to answer the question, When shall this kingdom be set up ? If one might here refer to an apocalyptic statement, it is after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ ; or, as it is stated elsewhere, in Daniel, when one like a son of man, for it is not one like *the* Son of man, because it is the Son of man—when one like a son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven, and there shall be given

to him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; and all people, nations, and languages, shall serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, that shall not pass away, and his kingdom, in opposition to the previous four great kingdoms that had perished, shall not be destroyed. We find words which I cannot explain, except on the hypothesis I have tried to vindicate, in Psalm cxxii. 11: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." This promise in the Psalm is quoted also by the inspired apostle, when he speaks in Acts xi. 30: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;" Peter contemplating that as a fact in the future, and yet to be. So we read when Christ was revealed in the opening chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, at the 32nd verse: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Now here is some promise, make of it what you please, to the effect that in some sense, or in some shape, Christ shall sit upon the throne of his father David. If this can be explained figuratively, well and good; but it seems to me that no figurative expression exhausts it. When the Jews wished to make Jesus a king, we read he refused to be made a king. Even after his death and resurrection the apostles asked, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" His answer was not, The idea of such a kingdom overtaking Israel is a foolish tradition of the scribes and Pharisees, but simply a statement that it was not yet to be; "It is not for you to know the times

and the seasons ;" you have another duty to fulfil ; and when that duty is fulfilled, and the gospel shall be preached to the whole world as a witness, then the epochal hour shall sound from the steepes of heaven, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ."

Having alluded to the *when*, let us inquire where, in all probability, this kingdom shall be set up. I would not wrest a single syllable of this precious word ; but I am afraid that we read the Bible with a sort of vague, general, and misty apprehension of its meaning ; and that we do not attach to it what I believe to be its sublime prerogative—that every word that is employed in this book is, all circumstances, all ages considered, the very best, and the choicest, and the most significant. I believe in the verbal inspiration of the word of God : and therefore I take God's word, and I study it. I treat it like a precious gem ; I set it in every light ; I look at it at every angle ; I put it in every point of view, and at every distance ; and the longer I study it the more I see it reflecting and flashing forth the lights of that kingdom which shall never be moved. The question is, Where is this kingdom to be ? Now do not take my opinion as if I were inspired, and competent to pronounce, or as if I were infallible in my interpretation. The very essence of Protestantism is this, that the preacher draws his inference from premises that you have in your hand ; he is not one that adds to the Bible—he is simply the expounder of the Bible. I can say to you, with still greater emphasis than the apostle addressed it to his hearers, "I speak to you as unto reasonable men ; judge ye what I say." Then, in answer to the question where this kingdom is to be, I submit to

you the following statements. First, Daniel says that the kingdom will be a kingdom "under the whole heaven." When we speak of a kingdom under heaven, we mean and imply by it a kingdom on the earth. Where were the first four kingdoms? On earth. Where is the next kingdom to be? Also, according to every rule of interpretation, on earth. There is no intimation of a change of locality; there is only a distinct declaration of a change of succession. I read in the Psalm, "I will give thee," speaking to Christ, "the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." I understand these words literally, and look for the fulfilment of them as a promise and a prophecy which is yea and amen. Again, he says, in the 72nd Psalm: "He"—that is, Christ,— "shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." What a beautiful thought is it, now, that our Queen is at this moment the Queen of Sheba and Seba! India has been added to her realms; and from India yet shall come gold, and incense, and swelling and ascending hosannas to Him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth; and Sheba's and Seba's queen shall bring gifts to King Messiah. I read, also, in Revelation v. 9, as follows: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." It is literally true that we are made by Christ's blood kings and priests unto Him; it shall be literally true that we shall reign with him upon the earth. But, you say, is not the

earth to be utterly destroyed? and did not you allude to this fact in the 2nd Epistle of Peter, where we read, "The earth and the things that are therein shall be burned up?" I answer, I did not say it is to be annihilated; on the contrary, I believe such passages as these: "The earth he has established for ever;" "The earth abideth for ever;" and all that the last fire will do will be to disinfect it of all its evil, to eliminate from it all its corruption, to purify it till it sparkles like a glorious diamond in infinite space, on which is engraven the name of its Redeemer and its Creator; and where we shall have reflected the light of peace, and joy, and love, for ever and ever. I believe there is no planet, no star, in the heights and depths of space, so intensely interesting, or so worthy, notwithstanding all its apostasy, to last for ever, as this same earth of ours. What star has such brilliant antecedents, such magnificent associations? It is covered with "peniels," or the evidences that God has been here. Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Zion, Calvary, and Tabor—oh! would there not be tears in heaven were these grand historic memorials of all that was greatest and most precious in the history of the universe to be expunged and effaced from the world for ever? I believe that you and I, subjects of that kingdom, will walk together on this earth, and I will tell you, Here the Prince of the kings of the earth lay in a manger, there He lay in a grave; here is the garden of Arimathea, there is the Mount of Olives; here He rose from the dead; here He ascended in the clouds, and the glory received him out of sight. And if the disciples journeying to Emmaus had their hearts warmed while he told them of the prophecies and of their fulfilment, will not our hearts glow with grati-

tyde, and thrill with ecstasy, and add new music to our rapturous song, "Unto Him that thus loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath redeemed us, and restored the world, and made it that beautiful orb that it then will be, be glory, and honour, and dominion for ever and ever?" All that the last fire will do will be to consume the tares. In the beautiful language of the parable, "All that offend shall be gathered out; the righteous shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father; the end is the harvest of the earth." But what does the husbandman burn the weeds for in the harvest? That the soil of next spring may be more prolific. The very burning of the weeds in harvest, and the gathering of the wheat into garners, indicates that there is to be a sweeter spring time, a softer and a more enduring summer than has ever yet overtaken our world.

Let us try next to answer the question, Who are to be the subjects of this kingdom? We have seen what it is, where it is, and probably when it will be; let us now ask the question, Who are to be the subjects of it? I answer, Men raised from the dead, clad in resurrection robes, retaining all the identity of present life, leaving only for the last fire imperfection, sin, corruption, mortality, and decay; rising in all the dews of everlasting youth with regenerated hearts, this mortal having put on immortality, this corruptible having put on incorruptibility. What a magnificent assembly! countless as the dew-drops, and brilliant as these in the sunshine also. There will be Abel, the ancient proto-martyr; there Enoch, who never tasted death; there Moses from his unknown grave, standing on a Tabor which shall have more than Tabor's splendour, and

nothing of its transience; there will be heard the harp of David, resonant not only with the song of Moses, but also with the song of the Lamb; there will be Elijah, who ascended in his chariot of fire; there the Baptist; there Peter, who denied his Lord, and so wept, but is not denied by Him, and therefore so rejoices; there will be Paul, who counted all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him; there will be the eastern witnesses, who remained faithful when the East was covered with Mahometan darkness; there will be the western witnesses, from the caves of the Cottian Alps, and from the subterranean tombs and catacombs of Rome; there also will be Martin Luther; there Knox, that feared not the face of clay; there Cranmer, who cared not that the right hand should be burnt that in its infirmity signed once his recantation; there will be Wilberforce, and Simeon, and Felix Neff, and the great and good Chalmers, and the eloquent Robert Hall; there, in one word, will be the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs. All that grace has sanctified, and all that glory can dignify, will be there at that day, constituting a mighty multitude; not a few, as the bigot says; not all, as the universalist believes; but a mighty multitude that no man can number, ransomed out of every tongue, and kindred, and nation, and people, casting their crowns in flashing showers before the feet of the Lamb, and waving the palms of an immortal triumph. And oh! what a hallelujah will that be when the prophet's strain upon a people's lips shall swell to heaven for ever and ever, "Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Such, I believe, will be that kingdom; such will be the subjects of it, of all sects, all denominations, all parties.

Now, says the Saviour at the close of this, just as the buds of a fig-tree prophesy the summer, so the events that He speaks of indicate the approach of this kingdom. He tells what these events are; some of them very awful—signs in the sun and in the moon, distress of nations, perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth. Many of these things which He likens to buds are in themselves most painful; men's hearts failing them, earthquakes, famines in divers places, pestilences, and so on; but they are, to use the words of the poet, the bitter buds that unfold in sweet flowers:—

"The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

What do the buds of spring say? The least bud on the lilac in the spring, or the least bud upon the apple tree, is the evidence that the winter is passing away. The buds do not come out on a frosty day; though sometimes in the depth of winter a bud comes out, as if the tree felt that its duty is to bud and blossom, and its nature also; but as the frost nips it, it retreats again into its sheltered recess, and waits patiently for the foot-fall of the approaching spring. The least bud in spring is to me the evidence that winter is passing away—that the dry and withered branches that have rattled like skeletons in the winter winds, covered with the snow-drift, are about to take heart, and to blossom again. So when you see these things coming to pass, however sad they may feel, they are nevertheless tokens that the dreary winter of a cold, heartless orthodoxy in the church, and apathy in the world, is passing away, and that the breath of spring, even of the Spirit of God, begins to waken up the life and to call forth the buds

of every branch of the Lord Jesus Christ. These buds, however bitter, intimate to us that the flowers and the fruits will come. The bud in spring is the sure prophecy of the approaching fruits of summer. These things that He mentions here are the first beams of the nearing sunrise. When you see them, whether now or not, a Christian is not to be cast down, depressed, and disquieted. All Scripture tells us that as the buds swell and increase in size, and indicate the nearing approach of the summer, the Christian's heart is to be lifted up, and he is to rejoice in the hopes of summer, with joy that is unspeakable, because full of glory. The future that is before us is the summer. Who cares for the bleak winds of March, and the drenching showers of April, when we bear in mind that those winds are not singing the dirge of what is gone, nor those showers the tokens that there will be no more sunshine, but that they are, in reality, the foretokens of the approaching sunny summer? We are blameworthy if we do not take notice of these things. Our Saviour blamed the Pharisees for knowing the signs of good weather and bad weather, and not noticing moral signs of greater value; so we shall be blameworthy if we will not see the buds in providence that are the prophets of the heavenly summer, or that kingdom which never shall be moved. God is in history just as much as in the gospel. God is in every fact of history as truly as in every text of the Bible. All providence is writing up a commentary upon all inspiration; and as we compare the facts in providence with the predictions in Scripture, we are just studying the young sweet buds of spring; and seeing and anticipating through them that grand, that everlasting summer to which all past ages have contributed, and in whose glory they shall all be crowned.

LECTURE VI.

HE THAT IS TO COME.

The certainty of the advent none deny. The time and manner of it it is proper to discuss in a sober, kind, and charitable spirit.

“ This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”—ACTS i. 11.

THE words of two celestial visitants in white apparel seem to have satisfied the anxious apostolic group who gazed into heaven ; for it is stated that immediately after they received the message, “ they returned unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.” It has oft been a question discussed by the good, what is meant by those ceaseless references to Christ’s second advent spread over so many pages of the sacred volume ? Is it a mere figure of speech, which we may exhaust by understanding it to mean the death of the Christian, or the providential interposition of God ? or is it what most Christians believe, that the Saviour who personally ascended into heaven from the mount of Olives, personally will descend from heaven, and we shall see Him just as He is, and His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives ? Whatever may be supposed to be the antecedents of

this advent, or whatever may be supposed to be the issues of it, every man who believes the Apostles' Creed, and repeats or subscribes it—a document not inspired, but constituting a very clear and explicit summary of Christian facts—believes that He ascended into heaven, that was personally; that He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, that is personally; and that He will come again to judge the quick and the dead, which must be personal also. In a personal advent of the Saviour everybody believes; the only question is, What is the meaning and precise import of that expression? Is it, according to some, a mere providential advent? We say, He comes in the storm, He comes in the beautiful and bright sunshine; we say, He came (and this is a perfectly scriptural illustration of it) at the destruction of Jerusalem. We do not deny a providential advent; we repeat, Christ is in the chapters of history, just as truly as He is in the chapters of the Bible. We believe that acts in providence are as much from Him, and by Him, and through Him, as are the texts in the word of God. That He came, at the destruction of Jerusalem, in a modified, providential sense is unquestionably true; but you will notice, in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and in the 21st chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, that it is after the destruction of Jerusalem—after the Jews shall be scattered into all lands—after Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles—that He will come in the clouds of heaven, with power and with great glory. I maintain, therefore, that this cannot be a mere providential advent; but is it, as some believe, a purely spiritual advent? I answer, What is the use of looking for a spiritual advent when that spiritual advent is the Christian's experience every day?

What does He tell us? "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." What does He say? "Go and preach the gospel to every creature; and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." His providential presence is every day heard in the echoes of the facts that transpire in the hearing of the world; His spiritual presence is felt in every sanctuary, and enjoyed in every humble and regenerated heart. We maintain, therefore, that the presence referred to in the sacred text, and alluded to in this verse, is a personal descent from heaven and manifestation on this very globe, as personal, as visible, as real, as when He trod the waves of the obedient sea, or walked a weary pilgrim on the streets of Jerusalem, or shone in the radiance of heaven on the heights of Tabor; or ascended, as He did, personally, visibly, from the mount of Olives; that even so, in like manner, will He come again. Those who do not accept this, as it seems to me, plain and intelligible interpretation must have enormous difficulties in dealing with the Jews. I have conversed with Jews, enlightened, I would almost venture to say pious Jews; and sometimes I have found a Jew giving far more evidence of being a Christian than many a baptized man. In conversing with the Jew, I ask him, How do you get over the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, that promise of a Messiah to come, and to suffer? They say, It is all figurative and spiritual; and the only advent of the Messiah that they look for is, His advent to emancipate the Jew, and enthrone him in Jerusalem, the capital, and the joy, and the beauty of the whole earth. If you say the first advent was personal, but the second is spiritual or providential, the Jew naturally retorts, and

says, 'You make it personal when it suits your purpose, and spiritual when it does not suit it; you object to me regarding the first advent as spiritual, and the second as personal. Why, I may object to you with equal force, for you regard the first as personal, but the second you explain away as figurative and spiritual. The consistency of the reasoning demands that both are metaphors, or both are facts; both are figurative, or both are personal.' The Jew is perfectly right in looking for a glorified Messiah, and that Messiah will be manifested to him; he is only wrong in ignoring a humiliated and a suffering Messiah. But may not we, if not so fatally, be at least as logically wrong when we hail, and lean on, and glory in a crucified Messiah, but repudiate and lose the forethrown splendour, happiness, and hope, of a Messiah that is yet to reign and shine before his ancients gloriously? That this advent of the Saviour is a truth not very rarely alluded to in the word of God is evident from passages, many of which will occur to every reader of the Bible. For instance, we read in Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Again, we read in the book of Revelation, almost in similar words: "Behold, he cometh in clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." And in Zechariah xiv. 4, there is a remarkable prediction, that instantly

suggests the ascent of the Saviour in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It is stated, in the Acts of the Apostles, that he ascended from the mount of Olives, that round, beautiful hill, about a sabbath day's journey distant from Jerusalem; from that mount he ascended into heaven. Now, it is very remarkable that Zechariah predicts, in the 14th chapter, at the 4th verse, that He shall come again, in the following words:—
“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”
In the words of the Epistle to the Thessalonians, Christ shall descend, with them that sleep in Jesus. He ascended from that mount; and the prophet leads us to believe that He shall descend on that very mount again. It is not right to explain away plain words of Scripture. Wherever the literal interpretation does not involve absurdity, contradiction, nonsense, I always accept it. Now, these words are so specific, so elaborately minute, that I cannot explain them away. I must accept the simple prediction that those sacred feet that were nailed to the cross for me shall one day stand upon the mount of Olives, that is before Jerusalem on the east, when the Lord my God shall come and all his saints shall come with him. And what shall take place then?

We read in the same chapter of Zechariah : "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." And strange, or rather striking it is, that the late venerable Dr. Chalmers, who took another estimate of this very doctrine I am considering in his early days, in his later days fully accepted what I am now trying to explain. In his "Readings on the Old Testament Scriptures," and referring to Zechariah, the venerable professor says : "His people will see him one day whom they pierced, perhaps when his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, and Jerusalem shall again become the metropolis of the whole earth." I am not, therefore, singular in the sentiment : and I cannot understand how any mind, accepting Scripture in all its simple and expressive usages, can come to any other conclusion than that which the two men announced to the wondering disciples : This very same Jesus shall so come down again, on this very mount, and in this very mode, as you have seen him personally, from this mount, go up.

Sometimes the objection occurs to Christians, Is there not something lowering and degrading in this, that Christ should personally come to this earth ? I answer, Take care lest you form an estimate of Him that leads you to lose the preciousness of his brotherhood and identity with you ; his having taken your nature, and being clad in your humanity, and therefore able completely to sympathise with you. He was not degraded when He walked upon the streets of Jerusalem ; He was not tainted by the breath of the millions when He breathed the air that we breathe ; He was not tainted, still less degraded. No ; He was clothed with a greater magnificence and beauty when He sat at the table of the

publican, conversed with him, enlightened, sanctified, saved him. Was the Saviour degraded when He came down and talked with Abraham on the streets of Sodom and Gomorrah? Was the Saviour degraded when He, as captain of the Lord's host, spoke with Joshua? What makes heaven? The presence of Christ. What makes hell? The absence of Christ. Where He comes, all will be transfigured, transformed, and glorified; and this earth never will be beautiful, creation never will be harmony, human hearts never will be happy; sickness, and sorrow, and tears, will never flee away, till He come and touch the earth, and wave over it his priestly hand, and cause its deserts to rejoice, and its solitary places to blossom even as the rose. This great truth, which was spoken to the apostles, is no accidental utterance; it is scattered, as I have told you, through every portion of the Bible. Look at such passages as these: "We know that when he shall appear," therefore He will come; "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." And again: "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." And again: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." And again: "Set your affections upon things that are above, where Christ is;" "looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, our great God and Saviour." And in this very book of the Acts of the Apostles we read in the 3rd chapter, at the 19th verse, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" "times of refreshing," that seem to have begun through various portions of the habitable globe; "and he shall send Jesus

Christ." When he says, "God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world;" what do you understand? That he came personally. Well, says the apostle, after Christ had ascended into heaven: "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." And so the apostle, again, writing to Timothy, in almost similar words expresses his hope and his belief of his advent at that day: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." In reading the New Testament we find little said and we have nothing to do with death. Death is not once, or at least, seldom made a motive for hope, for joy, for peace, for progress, for holiness, for conformity to Christ. The constant hope set before us is Christ's personal advent; the constantly inspiring joy is the promise that He will come. Therefore we have nothing to do with death but to defy him, or to make him welcome as Christ's messenger; that we are no more to look forward to the grave than to a sickbed; to death than to fever, or pestilence, or cholera; they are the progeny of sin, over which we may triumph, but from which we shall look up for the glorious appearing of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, and who shall change our vile bodies that they may be like unto his glorious body, at that day when He shall come to be admired and glorified in all them that believe. It is only by this that we can have a cheering and a bright hope in reference to the future. Why should we be

always looking forward to the grave, to the worm, to corruption, to death, to decay? These are the dark, sepulchral things that flesh and blood shrink from; and we can only overcome the fear of them, and the approach of them, by looking at that rising Sun in whose rays they shall all be dissolved. Have you ever looked on a mountain chain at sunrise in the morning? If so, you will notice that the sunbeams touch every mountain crag with rosy light, till they shine and sparkle in his approaching rays: but that the valleys between the hills are entirely hidden. So should it be when we look into the future. Let us look at every point, every salient point that is stated in a promise, gilded with the glory of the approaching sunrise; but let death, and decay, and disease, and all that depresses and darkens, sink into the valley between, invisible, as they are unwelcome to flesh and blood.

Having brought out the great fact itself, let me in the next place try to show why we should look forward to this; and I will do so in very few words, and with very few illustrations. The first ground is, that then we shall be raised to that dignity, and glory, and sovereignty, which is ours in reversion, though not now in possession. For what does the Saviour say? "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration;" only, I may mention, our translation is wrongly pointed in that passage; Matthew xix. 28. The ordinary reader in reading it would read, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration," attaching the regeneration to following; but that is not either the structure of the Greek or the necessity of the sentence. You must read it this way: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man

shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one," at the close of this economy, "that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake;" mind you, it must be for that. Many people forsake their houses because they are too old, or do not like them; some forsake wives and children because they won't work to support them: here it must be forsaking them because the confession of Christ demands the sacrifice; "for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." That is a blessed hope. Christ tells us to that bright reward we may look forward in that day when He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go.

Another accompaniment of that event will be that all Christians will be manifested just as they then are. The apostle tells us in Romans viii. that all creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. Now, Christians are hidden; I do not mean that a Christian's light will not so shine that others, seeing his good works, will glorify his Father in heaven; but that we cannot draw a sharp mechanical line of demarcation between those who are Christians and those who are not. Some we expect to meet in heaven we shall miss; many a one we never dreamed of meeting there we shall find; because the diversity of human character, the peculiarities of human idiosyncrasy, and the temperament that men have by nature, are so varied, that their Christian profession—not their Christianity, but their Christian profession—is affected by it. I have met men I believed, and knew, and have ascertained to be deep, heart-feeling, regenerated men, who scarcely say a word; and their

deeds are done secretly, and their sacrifices are those that God only sees. If I were not to know these men intimately, from other observatories and through other lattices, I should pronounce them to be no Christians at all. You find it so nationally, in reference to the descent of the Spirit of God. An Irishman's Christianity, deep, fervent, real, as I believe it to be, is fully expressed in his words; an Englishman's is far less demonstrative; a Scotchman needs to be sifted and searched; he is reluctant to say how much he believes, lest he should say more than he actually feels. National character modifies religious profession; and we must rarely judge of each other, but rather believe all things, hope all things; and never omit those modifying constitutional and personal peculiarities that so modify men's Christian character. I have met with a man who had not one particle of the grace of God in his heart, who did not even accept the gospel; but so amiable, so affectionate, so domestic, so charitable, so profuse in his donations to all that was good, that, like the young man in the gospel, you could not help loving him. I have met with a real Christian, a thorough Christian, but who had so cross and crabbed a temper that every impression you formed of him was that he was an unconverted and unsanctified man. You compare these two characters, the world would say that the former is the Christian, and the latter is not. When grace takes possession of a man's heart, we think only of what it should create; and we forget what a deal it has to sweep away before it begins to create. One man is constitutionally worse than another; and grace in the worst character has so much inner work in cleaning out the den of thieves, that it is a long time before its outer work can be de-

veloped in whatsoever things are pure, and just, and beautiful, and lovely, and of good report. When Christ comes, all the clouds will be dispersed, all the diluting elements of evil will be dissolved, all that conceals the Christianity of one, and mars the profession of another, will be swept away; and we shall shine forth as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever: the mask of hypocrisy is gone, the kiss of the traitor is impossible; we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be seen just as we are.

When He comes, we shall, in the language of John, see Him as He is. I believe we have at present most dim and distorted apprehensions of the blessed Saviour; but when He comes we shall see Him as He is. The marks of the nails are probably still on his hands; the mark of the spear—that wound that is glorious with a glory that is imperishable for ever—may still be there; He is in our flesh and our blood, holy; holy, holy, without moral imperfection, infinite, removed from sin; but still I cannot lose my elder brother in my God, just as I cannot merge my God in my elder brother; He is God manifest within the limits of your and my humanity.

We shall there find—and this is another reason why we should look forward to this—the restoration of all who have been taken from us by death, or are hidden from us in the shadow of the grave. How beautiful are these words, and how sweetly they must ring by the graves of the dead—"If we believe"—and there is no doubt of it—"that Jesus died, and rose again; even so them that sleep in Jesus will He bring with Him!" What a glorious thought! Not only will Christ come; but in the words of Zechariah, all his saints with Him.

Those that you committed to the grave will come down to this very world of ours again ; and at that very grave they will put on the robes of flesh that you deposited there ; but no longer the clinging garments of decay, but coronation garments, bridal robes, this mortal putting on immortality, this corruptible incorruptibility, and death swallowed up in victory. The grave will not quench one feature that constitutes our identity. We shall leave nothing for the last fire except what we would wish to be eliminated now ; imperfection, sin, mortality, and decay. If, therefore, we have a desire—and who has not ? for there is one freehold that we all have, a grave ; and there is property on earth that every one has, that is, the dust that was once animate and living—that these broken circles should be reknit ; that those who have left us should return ; the fathers, and mothers, and sisters, and brothers, and husbands, and wives, and all that made up that exquisitely musical and blessed word *home*, should again see us, and we see them, to tell over the story of our pilgrimage below, and to lift up together the anthem peal that celebrates our joys above—we shall long for that day when we shall see Him come in like manner as we have seen him go.

Not only shall they all be restored, but death itself shall be everywhere destroyed. Everywhere there is death. Is it not a remarkable fact that there is nothing that you can plant, or build, or lay aside, that death in some of his formulas does not instantly set upon ? Build walls of granite, and decay ; and what is decay ? the breath of death will instantly begin to act upon them. Build your houses of parliament of stone selected by the best judges, and death with his fangs is already

gnawing into dust the fabric that cost millions of the nation's wealth. The sweetest flowers that burst into bloom will no sooner reach their full bloom and beauty than death will breathe upon them, and they will wither and be resolved into earth again. All that man builds, all that nature throws up from her bosom, all that is beautiful in the heights, all that is fragrant in the depths, all are under the *régime* of decay, disease, and death. What a glorious day will that be—who does not wish it?—when flowers bloom that shall never fade, when trees grow whose leaves shall never wither and fall! We all feel what a lovely sight a green thing is in the winter; and when we go in the depth of winter and see the laurel, and the laurestinus, and the box all green, it seems as if God had given them just to keep the pathway open from summer that is gone, for that summer to come back again, and be in the midst of us once more. But a day comes when all trees shall be evergreen—all flowers amaranthine; and there shall not be one trace of decay or of death over a renovated, a restored, and a happy globe; and then shall be brought to pass in all its fulness the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Satan will be cast out, the restless fomentor of what is wicked, the instigator of what is depraved, the inspirer of what is vile. He combines all the strength of the archangel with all the malignity of the fiend. And what an archangel's strength is we do not know; what the malignity of a fiend is, the tragic stories of our world are too often the terrible testimonies. Satan will be cast out, and bound for at least a thousand years. Thus we long for that day when Christ shall come. Let us now see sights that will be reproduced at that great harvest; let us

now collect in our hearts the feelings that we would wish to see there. My impression is, that not only is the regeneration of the heart begun now that shall be perfected in heaven, but that partially the resurrection of the body begins even while we are living. How often have we noticed that a man's countenance, whatever be its features, reflects and reproduces more or less the dominant passion? I could select a miser at once by the compressed forehead, on which mammon has been inscribing his accounts in lines deeply engraved, that cannot be effaced, and the downward look. I could tell you the man that lives in the gratification of foul lust and passion; it is visible on his face. The sensualist needs no very skilful interpreter to detect him. It is easy to point out the man who is animated by burning ambition, or the man who is actuated by corroding envy. What are all these passions doing? Just writing themselves on the physical structure of the man. It is a wonderful tribute to the strength and greatness of the soul that it can force the body to record outwardly its inner feelings and workings. And if that be true, may it not then be possible that not only is the heart undergoing that change that shall be perfected in heaven, but even the body is now receiving, from the action of the soul, the heart, the intellect, the passions, those outward characteristic features which will be developed only more sharply and distinctly at the resurrection day?

Let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; let us set our hearts upon things that are above; and when He comes we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Only remember that the grace that culminates in glory begins now—that the character that is perfected in heaven begins now—and

that most men die as they live ; and while conversion at the stroke of the twelfth hour is a possibility, and may be pressed, offered, received, enjoyed ; yet the man that puts off the concerns of his soul to that hour is hardening his heart.

LECTURE VII.

LOOKING FOR HIS RETURN.

Faith fills the past and hope the future. The one rests not till it finds the cross. The other pauses not till it alights on the crown. A Christian feels the deepest in "The Was, and Is, and Is to come."

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—HEBREWS ix. 27, 28.

CHRIST JESUS is set before us in this passage as once offered to carry away, as the scapegoat did, the sins of many; while to them that look for Him He has promised to come again the second time without sin unto salvation. There are two great facts in the history of mankind: first, death; secondly, its sequel, the judgment. There are two great facts in the biography of Christ first, his atoning death once for all; and, secondly, his appearance again to them that look for Him. Let us look at these four prominent and distinctive facts. Death is the lot of all. The longest life must end in death; the stream of life must rush universally into this dense sea.

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No prescription of skill can avert it, no strength of constitution finally overcome it. The strongest and the frailest, the longest lived and the shortest lived must equally, and universally, and without exception, and in spite of every precaution, die. Man was not so made originally. A poet says—

“Man was made to mourn.”

This is not true. Man was made to be happy, to be immortal; to live in happiness—a creation of beauty and of joy—for ever: and if he is not now what his constitution once was, the fault is not in his Maker, but in him. The only explanation of a change in the original destiny of man is, that sin entered, which God did not make, and death by sin; and so death produces the disorganization of this exquisite economy, which was once so beautiful, of which God pronounced, as well as of the earth on which it was meant to live, “Very good.” Tears and ills, and aches and losses, and sicknesses and sorrows, and death, are subsequent intrusions into man’s world; they were not in the inventory of those things that God pronounced “Very good.” and, as they did not come from God, so they will not be admitted or endured when God shall reconstitute and reconsecrate all things, and exhibit to the universe an orb brighter and more beautiful than it was when it first proceeded from his beneficent and plastic hand. But it is now, we are told, appointed unto man once to die: not originally, but subsequently appointed. Man gave hospitality to sin; and the moment he accepted that poisonous parent he opened the door of access to his soul to all the progeny of sin—the aches, the sorrows, the ills that flesh is heir to. The sentence

originally denounced is fulfilled in every individual. "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die." The instant we are born we begin to die. There is no such phenomenon now as a perfectly healthy man. In every one of us there is the commencement of death, that is, disease. In every one of us there are defects, and failings, and taints, and poisons, and decay, which are the commencement and the premonitory symptoms of that approaching dissolution which is the wages of sin, and the consequence of our personal participation in it. But, at the same time, it is very interesting that, whilst all the consequences of sin have been provoked by man, death has become now, in the providence, and by the mercy of God, an appointment. He has overruled our sins to his glory, and out of the evil we superinduced He has been pleased to educe good to us. Whilst sin leads to death, it does not do so without the presence, the control, the *surveillance* of God. Hence it is *appointed* unto man to die. God has fixed the hour, the day, the how, and the where; as fixed as that stars shall move in their orbits; as spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter. Our death is not in the cold hand of fate, but in the loving hand of our Father. Our departure from this world is not surrendered to the contingency of an accident; but it is according to the arrangement, in the purpose, and under the government of God. "It is appointed unto men once to die; and after death the judgment." Whilst death is an appointment it is no less true that it comes to all in various forms. In some it comes in infancy; in the case of others in youth; in the case of others in mature years; in the case of some in old age. But at whatever time death comes, in whatever circumstances death overtakes

us, it is in the form, and at the time, and under the circumstances that are best for us, and most for the glory of God. If we be Christians our death will not occur too soon, it will not occur too late; it will just take place when it shall be the greatest contribution to the praise of Him that redeemed us by his blood, and when we are ripest and fittest for being transplanted to the paradise of our God.

After death, says the apostle, comes the judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." That is to say, the instant that death takes place, the judgment, as far as that individual is concerned, takes place also. "Once to die, and after death the judgment;" not referring, I think, to the judgment of all, but to the destiny or the doom of the individual thus dying. The instant that the soul emerges from the body, it enters on its place of joy or its place of sorrow; and the addition of the body to that soul at the resurrection is only the enhancement of its joy or in addition to its misery. "After death," he says, "the judgment." The soul does not cease to be because it ceases to inhabit its terrestrial tenement: the disorganization of what we see is the emancipation of what we are; and when the dead dust is taken to its resting-place beneath the green sod, the living soul that is really the man, that constitutes the individuality, that emerges from the wreck, ascends to the presence of God, rests not if it be a believer's till it worships as a priest within the vail, where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore.

This reveals to us another interesting fact—that there is no process or purification between death and the judgment. First, there is death; next, the judg-

ment. There is no process after death preparatory for the decisions of the judgment. As the tree falls, so it lies; as death leaves us judgment inevitably finds us. And it also shows that there is no such thing as the sleep of the soul after death. The judgment on the soul implies that the soul is capable of being judged; that it is sensible and alive to the decision of joy or the doom of misery that shall be found at the judgment seat.

This judgment here referred to is less examination and more fixture of character. Our Lord states that He will say to them that are his, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." He says to the lost, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The judgment day universal will not be an examination, an investigation; but it will be the decision upon character, and the fixture of that character irreversibly and for ever. What a man is found to be at the judgment seat, that he will be left to be for ever and ever.

Now then, says the apostle, just as death must overtake each and all; and just as judgment follows on the footsteps of death; fixing the character that death gives up, not altering, but stereotyping the moral and spiritual condition that leaves the world; as certain as these two things, so certain is it that Christ once died to bear the sins of many, and that He, too, will come again to them that look for him without sin unto salvation. Do all men die? Then so true is it that Christ died. But there is a distinction, or rather a vast difference between our death and his. He died not because He was sinful, but because our sins were upon Him. He died not because of anything evil in his nature, but because

voluntarily and freely He took upon Him the sins, the transgressions, and the guilt of all that shall believe to the end of the world on his saving name. His death was not a natural death, it was not a martyr's death, but a victim's death. He died not to show how a good man could leave the world, but to show how a guilty man can be forgiven all his sins and his iniquities. He was offered a sacrifice or an atonement for the sins of all that believe; or, to use the language of the apostle, was "once offered to bear the sins of many." That phrase at once carries us back to the scapegoat. In what sense could Christ bear the sins of many? Just as the priest of Israel confessed the sins of Israel over the scapegoat, laying his hands upon the head of the victim, dismissing that victim into the desert, and the sins he confessed were no more visited upon him in retribution; so that he lays the sins of his soul, the transgressions of his life, by the exercise of simple trust, confidence, or faith upon Christ, the Lamb of God, has those sins imputed unto him, and borne away into a desert place, and no more brought up in righteous retribution or in judgment against him. Nothing can be plainer from the language used than the allusion of the apostle to the ancient type. And that type again casts light upon the great truth that is before us; and teaches us that what ancient Israel did materially we do morally in trust, in faith, in confidence. We do with the hands of the soul what the Israelite did with the hands of the body; we lay from the inner man our trust upon that perfect ransom, just as the Israelite laid the weight of the outer man upon the head of the scapegoat, confessing his sins over it, and had it dismissed into the desert. And just as the Israelite returned from that act, satisfied

that the scapegoat had borne away a nation's sins, so we may rise from confessing our sins at the throne of grace with perfect confidence that our sins are borne away by the Lamb of God, and shall be no more remembered against us.

But the apostle says that Christ was *once* offered. That word *once* is the translation of a Greek word that occurs exactly nine times in the epistle to the Hebrews. The word, literally translated, is not *once*, but *completely, perfectly* ; so perfectly that it needs nothing more to be done. Now the meaning here is this :—that Christ was offered so completely, so perfectly, that we need nothing more of offering to accomplish the great end for which He suffered. Just as under the ancient economy, the high priest was seven days in being purified—that is, perfectly equipped or fitted for his office—so Christ was perfectly or completely offered, needing not to be offered again, or anything to be offered in addition to Him. If this be so, all pretended offerings of Christ are vain ; the notion of the Lord's Supper being an atoning sacrifice is unwarranted. It is dishonour to the blessed Saviour, and a pernicious delusion to the souls of mankind. The Lord's table commemorates the sacrifice that was once made ; it does not constitute, or contain, or offer the sacrifice. It merely carries back the thoughts of the celebrant to a sacrifice once made ; it neither is one nor proclaims the necessity of any one additional to what has already taken place.

And as Christ was once offered, so it says He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation. In what sense will He appear the second time ? He now is present ; because his promise is, " Whosoever two

or three are met together in my name there am I in the midst of them." But He will come at the close of this dispensation as the lightning shineth from east to west in the cloud in the glory of his Father, and with his holy angels. Every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall weep because of Him. Just as sure as Christ suffered once for all, so sure will Christ come again. So sure as He bare the sins of many, expiating their guilt, will He come again, no longer a sacrifice for sin, but a righteous Judge, to reward every man according as his works shall be. When Christ came first He came bearing the load of a world's transgressions; the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, making expiation for sin: but when Christ comes again He will come, his atonement completed, his intercession finished, to separate the tares from the wheat, and to assign to each its just, its righteous, and its irreversible retribution.

And He will come, we are told, to them that look for Him. "He will appear to them that look for Him." Then a Christian's attitude is that of looking for Christ. We look back to Him as our sacrifice; we look forward for Him as appearing the second time without sin unto salvation. A Christian's trust is in the atonement finished; a Christian's hope is in the glory that is to be revealed. And when He appears again, then the earth that has groaned and mourned under all its load of sorrows shall be emancipated and redeemed, and share in the elevation and the restoration of the men that have lived, and wept, and believed, and rejoiced upon it. When Christ comes again all them that have fallen asleep in Him, the Lord, according to his own blessed promise, will bring with Him. Hence the apostle, when

writing to his converts, says, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ"—that is, Christians who have died in the past—"shall rise first. Then we"—Christians which are alive and remain—"shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord;" broken circles will be repaired, scattered groups collected: the dead dust of many thousand years, and the living of the day, when He comes meeting together, recognizing each other again upon the earth, and rejoicing together in the presence and amid the glory of their communion with the Saviour.

Are we trusting on his sacrifice once offered when He bore upon his body the burden of a world's guilt? Have we laid our sins upon Him? Are we looking for forgiveness because it is so? And secondly, are we looking for Him? Do we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus?" Do we desire the advent of that day when all that grieves, vexes, annoys, offends, tempts, shall be cast away, and Christ the King shall reign over a holy and a happy universe, all blessed in Him and calling Him blessed?

LECTURE VIII.

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

The world is not to continue as it is. It will have its palingenesia. Times of refreshment will brighten into the times of the restitution of all that prophets have foretold.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts iii. 19—21.

CRITICAL or, more technically called, exegetical remarks upon this passage are not at present my object or desire. But there are some thoughts suggested by it which are full of instruction or practical value which it is desirable to evolve. Repentance is renunciation of sin in principle, in sympathy, and practice: in the first instance it is a powerful passion; in its permanent shape an indomitable principle. Men are walking in the wrong direction; and they are asked to turn round, and walk precisely in the opposite. “Be converted;”

converted from wrong preferences ; from the crooked way in which you walk ; from the passions you indulge ; from sinful objects that dominate within. "That your sins may be blotted out ;" blotted out, not in tears of repentance. All the tears that a penitent ever shed cannot expiate one sin : it is folly to imagine it, it must be disappointment to attempt it. There is only one element in the universe that can cancel the least sin, and, thank God, it can cancel the greatest—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." The translation is not correctly given in the text so far as regards the word *when* ; "That your sins may be blotted out, *when* the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." It ought to be read, "That your sins may be blotted out, and that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ; and that he may send Jesus Christ, whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things ; which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets." To whom was this addressed ? To the Jews ; the very people that crucified Christ. To them he says, Repent, and be converted, that times of refreshing may arrive. It may be asked, How can the conversion of the Jewish people bring on the times of refreshing and the restitution of all things ? We ask, How can prayer do it ? We pray, "Come, Lord Jesus ;" we pray, "Thy kingdom come ;" our prayers and labours are connected with the sovereign purpose of God. When Israel shall look upon Him whom they have pierced—when the Jews shall recognize in the Man of Sorrows the Messiah, the only Saviour, then shall arrive those times of the refreshing, those times of restitution of all things which wait for this ; and earth

shall end with a Paradise more beautiful, fragrant, and lasting, far more lasting, than that with which it began.

What is meant by these times of refreshing—these times of the restitution of all things? I do not enter upon the chronological meaning of the word; I would rather take the moral significance of the times of refreshing and restitution of all things. We need strength to battle with the world as we now find it; and grace to be more than conquerors; and it is a great help, in enabling us to do so, to be assured that evil shall not have the victory; that the patches of sunshine that illuminate the desert shall one day spread into the everlasting and the universal summer; and that those successive bits that we recover from the grasp of the foe are earnest and instalments of a world recovered from the domination of Satan, and restored to union and communion with God. Half the element of victory is the conviction that we shall obtain it.

But what are these times of refreshing? They are the burden of grand promises; they are the substance of a thousand prophecies. The word translated "refreshing," means, literally, coolness after heat, recreation by fresh air, refreshment as the earth is refreshed by the dews amidst the heat of summer; rest, peace, and quiet. Therefore times worthy of such epithets shall arise. There is need, indeed, of such times of refreshing. Sins predominate over the length of the world still; sins individual, social, and national. Of all scorching powers in the human conscience sin is the most intolerable. The apostle tells us, in his remarkable prophecy, that in the last days perilous times shall come; that men shall be lovers of their own selves; covetous, boasting, blasphemers, disobedient to

parents; unthankful, unholy. To a Christian, surely the era that ends these, and delivers us from their heat and torture, must be a time of refreshment. The great time of refreshment will be also promoted when the dark clouds that obscure the sky, the cloud of Mahometanism in the east, the cloud of the Popedom in the west, shall all be swept away; and the now intercepted beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall fall upon a world at peace with itself and at peace with God. It is impossible to over-estimate the amount of refreshment accruing from the accomplishment of the prediction that Mahometanism shall wane, that Romanism shall be destroyed, and a pure worship and holy incense shall ascend to God from all lands and all tongues. Another element of this refreshment will be the casting out of Satan. It is a very awful thought that there is a being armed with an archangel's strength, inspired by a fiend's malignity; whose whole employment, and if I may use the word, whole joy is success in seducing and destroying humankind. There is no doubt that some of those great crimes we hear of are the inspirations of him who is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. As we praise the man who does a good deed, but give the glory and the honour of it to God, we should, by parity of reasoning, condemn the man who does a wicked deed, but give the discredit and the dishonour of it to Satan. If God be the author of all good, let the subject of the good have our approbation, but let the God that inspired the good have the glory. If Satan be the inspirer of great sins, let the criminal endure the punishment, but let us not forget to give him to whom it is due a portion of the discredit and the obloquy. We read in prophecy that Satan will be bound, and cast

into the bottomless pit, and will destroy nations no more. The removal of that one malignant force from our world will be a time of intense and glorious refreshment. We give to Satan that prominence in evil which is justly and scripturally his due. And by a great law it often occurs that those who give the Spirit of God all the glory in man's regeneration are the only persons that give the legitimate amount of discredit that is due to Satan for the great sins that stain the history and mar the happiness of mankind. It will be no ordinary amount of blessing when he who walks about seeking whom he may devour; who has, what I think is the most awful fact in Scripture, power to enter my heart without my consent, and to cast into that heart sparks of evil, and to awaken in the intellect purposes of mischief; and when he has succeeded in poisoning with sin, to awaken in the conscience the corrodings of remorse, like the very instalments of the condition and the sufferings of the damned, shall be ejected from the world. Delivered from his reach and power, and the possibility of his access to a single human heart, we shall feel that a time of refreshment has come upon the weary world. Another element of this refreshment will consist in God's Holy Spirit being given in greater abundance than ever. A time of partial refreshment is come. I noticed at the different meetings of the different religious societies in 1860, almost every one—bishops from the bench, curates from their parishes, ministers of various denominations—seemed to be impressed with the belief, with scarcely a dissentient voice, that whatever be the alloy in the gold, or the tares among the wheat, a time of refreshing has fallen upon sections of Ireland; that dews of the descending blessing have refreshed the parched cities of

Scotland ; and that on incidental spots, as on Gideon's fleece, the dew has settled even in the midst of this great metropolis. Among statesmen Ireland is the great complication and the unmanageable difficulty. God seems to have taken it out of the hands of statesmen, and out of the hands of church and chapel, and to have taken charge of it himself. At all events we have seen such irresistible proof of the presence of the Spirit of God, that one can scarcely doubt that a time of refreshment is begun ; and that the showers, some of which the cloud dropped 1800 years ago, have been accumulating in its bosom during eighteen centuries, and are beginning to descend in the shape of the latter rain. May they multiply till earth's deserts shall rejoice, and its parched places shall blossom even as the rose ! One is sorry to see in those who look at this phenomenon with suspicious eyes a disposition to select the defects, and magnify them, and to tone down and throw into the background the unquestionable blessings, and depreciate them. This is not fair. We do not expect in this world anything perfect. As long as imperfect man is the material on which a perfect heaven must act, so long we must find shadow in the sunshine, alloy in the gold, tares amid the wheat. National character has in such things a modifying force. Sailors on the ocean always take into calculation what they call currents. So in estimating the effects of the Spirit of God descending upon a people, we must always take into our calculation national characteristics. Should the Spirit of God be poured out in abundance upon Ireland, its religion would be eminently enthusiastic, full of fervour ; every atom of it expressed in their own expressive and eloquent terms. Should the

same Spirit descend upon the English, the effects would be more quiet: they are not a demonstrative people. Should the same Spirit descend upon the Scotch, with their characteristic reserve, their reluctance to say more than they think, their fear of expressing all they feel, lest the expression should outrun the feeling—a tendency that sometimes goes into moral cowardice—we may expect a different manifestation still. But making allowance for all these and other modifying elements, as well as for all incidental defects, a time of refreshing is still too palpable to be denied. If it should be so, who can regret it? Is any one sorry that men should be better husbands and sons? that they should do their duties more earnestly? that they should have their hands no less busy, but their hearts and their treasures more entirely in heaven? Nobody ought to regret this: and if these are the fruits of the Spirit of God, we pray that such a time of refreshing may abound more and more.

Peter tells us, also, "that the times of the restitution of all things will come." What does this restitution mean? I have traced the Greek word in various parts of the New Testament; and I find, in every instance, it means restoration to that which once was. Thus, the hand of the man whose hand was curd was restored even as the other; that is the same Greek word, in the shape of a verb. Therefore I am satisfied that the times of the restitution of all things mean the times of the restoration of all things. The earth shall be restored to its Eden state; the curse shall be expunged; the fever that racks it shall be laid; the consecrating footstep of its Redeemer shall be felt by it; and from one end to the other it shall become as the garden of

the Lord. Nobody would be sorry if that time were already come. Is it desirable that the earth should continue scarred with graves? that it should be ploughed and torn in the shape of battle-fields? that it should mourn ceaselessly at the sufferings and the sorrows of its children? that it should be swept by plague, and pestilence, and famine? Can any one wish this to continue? Will anybody affirm that the earth is now as God made it, when we know that seven-tenths of it consist of sea, and desert, and parched and barren land, and marshes? Is the earth as it was when God pronounced it very good, in any portion of it at this moment? And if it be not, and if it be the burden of promises that it is to be restored, why should any regret it? If God is pleased to do it by the calcining action of the flames, or by a word to be launched from the air, or by another fiat, evolving it from chaos, in whatever shape it is done, surely we shall rejoice when the earth is restored to what it was in Eden, and the Paradise that is predicted closes its history. The apostle Paul tells us that all creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; and then he adds: "Creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." What a remarkable statement—creation groans, and travails, and is in pain, seeking to be delivered from its present depressed and injured condition! And yet every thing that we see in creation seems not satisfied where it is. The rock seems to aspire to flower in the form of beautiful crystals. The flower has in it latent possibilities of beauty such as we have not seen. The rose in our gardens is simply the wild hedge-rose cultivated. What

does cultivation do? It does not create in the rose something it had not; it merely evolves the latent beauties that had been repressed or borne down. When the curse is removed from creation; when earth is emancipated from the yoke of corruption, how magnificent will be its flowers, how glorious its trees, how sweet and pure the air! What harmony in the sound of wind, and wave, and all things, when earth shall be restored to that beautiful and happy condition in which it once was, and in which, we are taught in the Word of God, it shall be again! There are spots on this earth at this moment that we would accept as heaven, if any one would guarantee that there should not enter into them heartaches, headaches, griefs, disappointments, losses, bereavements, the breath of autumn, and the chills and frosts of winter. Take away these things, make man holy, and let man's health be perfect, and I could not wish a brighter or more beautiful nook in heaven than some of the sweet glens in the Highlands, or some of the sequestered, beautiful spots in various parts of England. The day will come, soon, when no breath of autumn shall brown the leaf; when no chill frosts shall nip the blossom; when there shall be nothing to hurt, nothing to destroy, in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord of hosts.

The church will be restored to what it once was. We often complain that the earth is the scene of battles, and we justly lament it; but I fear that churches are sometimes the scenes of battles also. At all events, it will be time enough to find fault with battles on the earth when we set the example of brotherhood and peace throughout the Christian church. At present no one will say that the visible church of Christ is in a perfect state; nothing is more imperfect. The best and

purest church in Christendom is simply a recruiting-station for the true church that is in heaven. It is merely enlisting and collecting men to be members of that church, part of which has crossed the flood, and part of which is crossing now. But a day comes when all its tares shall be removed; when all its alloy shall be consumed; when prayer shall swell into praise; when the Sun of Righteousness shall shine upon every corner of it; when sacraments shall cease, because the substance is come; when there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd, and his name one; and the church of the last day, like the church of the first, when only two were its members, shall be perfect, a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing.

When these times of restitution shall come, and the earth shall be restored, and the church shall be regenerated, there is reason to believe, and I cannot escape the belief, because I must take what I find in God's word, that there will be upon this earth one grand and beautiful metropolis, on which, or over which shall rest the *shechinah* in its imperishable splendour, and in which shall live and reign in happiness God's ancient people, long cast out, but who, on their return, shall have the precedence, as the inhabitants of that great metropolis, that city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God. The prophecies are full of this. He says of Jerusalem, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell. She shall be the city of the Great King, the beauty and the joy of the whole earth. Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion; and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy

mountain." We read also in the prophet Micah, when he describes the destruction of Jerusalem, and its restoration: "Zion shall be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." When is this to be? You may say, perhaps, that this means that Christianity was to have its birthplace there, and to radiate from that centre to the utmost circumference of the earth. But you will find that this time—when Jerusalem is to be exalted, when all nations shall flow to it—shall be when they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning-hooks; and nation shall not lift up the sword against nation any more; that is, at the close of this present economy. It seems, therefore, one of those great compensatory elements in the prophecies and purposes of God, that the people who for their sins have been trodden down, and peeled, and scattered amid the nations of the earth, in the day of the grand restoration of all things shall have precedence, not because of their merits, but because of God's distinguishing grace and goodness.

In the restitution of all things, the brute creation will be restored. I do not mean that the horse, or the dog, or the ox, have immortal natures, and that these

shall be resuscitated, but that the same state of the animal creation that prevailed in Paradise shall be reproduced in the restoration or restitution of all things. Oldshausen, the great German evangelical commentator, says: "As there is a regeneration of the individual, so there must be a regeneration of the earth itself. To this time all prophecies point; the deserts of the earth shall literally blossom again, and the lamb and the lion shall literally feed together." Now, nobody will pretend to say, at this moment, that the brute creation is in the state it once was, or should be, or, as predicted, it will be. The horse, that noble and beautiful creature, how cruelly is he treated in the streets of London! The lion and the tiger, once the subjects of man, have risen in insurrection against him; although it is said by travellers, that there is something in man, of his primal and aboriginal dominion, which even the lion will recognize; for if a man can look the lion in the face steadily and fearlessly, with unfaltering eye, the brute recognizes in fallen Adam a trace of his primal dominion and greatness, and shrinks and retreats from his presence. All prophecy is full of the prediction that the animal creation shall be restored. They fell because man fell; they will rise when man rises. The instant man rebelled against God, the subject animal creation rose in insurrection against man. But a day comes when what Milton depicts as the picture of paradise shall be reproduced.

"About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gamboll'd before them."

"The lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them."

When this restoration of all things takes place, death itself shall be destroyed. I cannot believe with some that death was ever meant to be part and parcel of the economy or physical condition of man. I know a most eminent American geologist, Hitchcock, thinks, from the traces of death in ancient pre-Adamite periods, that death was an original and meant to be a permanent feature in the history of brutes and men; and his idea is, that death in man was to be simply a transference from this world to a world brighter and more beautiful. But it does seem far more plainly deducible from the word of God, that Adam and Eve never would have died, nor we in them, if neither of them had sinned. The denunciation was, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." Now the Hebrew words are exquisitely expressive; they are, "In the day thou eatest thereof," "dying, thou shalt die the death in its every sense, and form, and shape," physical, spiritual, eternal. I must therefore understand, in the language of the apostle, that death is the wages of sin. Why should the unfallen man have to be transferred from this orb to another? There is not a lovelier orb in the sky, as it once was. It has grand historic antecedents, countless "peniels," from Calvary to Pentecost; its air my Redeemer breathed, its springs my Redeemer drank of; that hill in the midst of Jerusalem was the scene of a sacrifice the virtues of which can never be exhausted, and the glories of which will never be adequately sounded: in that great rock in the garden of Arimathea was the grave in which the Holy One lay; the mount of Olives was the scene from which He ascended;

Tabor once had all the splendour though little of the permanence of heaven as an aureole around its brow. These facts lend to this earth a historic interest, a moral grandeur, with which it seems to me its extinction from the number of the orbs in space, or its being left a solitary and a deserted orb, blasted and ruined, is altogether incompatible. Therefore, as man, when he fell, dragged earth into the arms of death, so man, when he rises, will bring up earth again from death to life, from the grave to which he brought it into that glory which God has provided for it. And surely no one will grieve when death is destroyed, when the grave is levelled, when dying shall be impossible. We were never made to die. No physiologist can explain why a man dies. Our physical organization has such exquisite provision for supply of what is wasted, for restoration of what is exhausted, that there is no reason in man why man should die. Then why does he die? The moral law is mightier than the physical law; man sinned, and, therefore, man dies.

When we consider the varieties of death—death on the wings of the pestilence, death on the battle-field, death by pining disease, and burning fever, and wasting consumption—who will be sorry when the time comes, that death with all its progeny shall die; and there shall be no more death, nor tears, nor sorrow, nor crying? At these times of the restitution of all things, there will also be the resurrection of the body. Our life, our restoration, would not be complete without it. I believe not, that a body is provided for each, eliminated out of the mass of mortality; but that those very bodies in which we are now clad, with all their features, with all their idiosyncracies, with all their traces and credentials

of identity, shall be reproduced at the resurrection morn; all imperfection eliminated, all trace of mortality, all taint of sin, expunged; but the perfect personal likeness reproduced in all the sharpness in which it was ever developed in Eden itself. And shall we be sorry for this? Should you like to believe that those you loved on earth, whose souls are now in heaven, shall be united soul and body at the last great day, and you not know them? That footfall that was music on your threshold; that voice, the tones of which are amidst your most familiar and imperishable reminiscences; that countenance, that like sunshine made the very door open at its approach—all that shall be reproduced in all its distinctness and clearness; and we shall know even as we are known.

When the restitution of all things shall take place, man's mental and moral nature will be also restored. Man gives evidence of great genius still: it is no light or feeble mental power that can launch the ocean steamer, construct the iron rail, produce monuments of genius like Milton's "Paradise Lost," or like the dramas of Shakspeare. These are evidences that incidentally among mankind there are discovered traces of a genius, and intellect, vaster, far vaster than we find on the ordinary level of life. Man's moral nature is fearfully depraved and degenerated. It would be altogether absurd to say that every man is so depraved that there is nothing good in him; there is nothing meritorious in him, but there are many traits of excellence lingering still. We shall find merchants on the Royal Exchange whose word is sure as an oath; men in commerce whose promise is as reliable as law; mothers that will die for their children; parents that

will spend and be spent in maintaining their home; thousands of lingering traits of a moral glory that has, indeed, become greatly deteriorated, but enough to tell us what a grand being man once was, and to be earnest and foretastes of that grand creation which man shall be again. When all things are restored, the heart shall be regenerated, the intellect illuminated; the horizon of the one and the sympathies of the other vastly expanded; all made new—no sickness, no sorrow, no night of evil, no night of error, no night of death; but all restored to a beauty, a harmony, a peace, a happiness, unprecedented in the past, unparalleled in the present; such as eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and heart hath barely conceived. Here then are the features of the times of refreshment; here is the restitution of all things.

We are told that this is all to be done, through Christ, who is preached unto us; preached unto us as the Redeemer; preached unto us as the Restorer; preached unto us as having paid the price, and exhausted the penalty; and given us to hope and to be assured that He who came to our world its Redeemer on a cross, will return to our world its Restorer, wearing many crowns.

“Through the harsh voices of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds its way:
Through clouds of doubt and creeds of fear
A light is breaking calm and clear.

“That song of love, now low and far,
Ere long shall swell from star to star:
That light the breaking day which tips
The golden-spined apocalypse.”

We pray that this day may come. I need not re-

mind you who is the way to it, by whose blood it is purchased, on whose promises it is founded. Are you believers in his name? Are you washed in the efficacy of his precious blood? Are you looking for the least crumb of bread and the brightest crown of glory through his mediation and his merits only? And do you find your hearts changed by the same Spirit, your natures sanctified by his grace, and yourselves like his Bride, looking for the return of Him who has promised to come and reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth?

LECTURE IX.

LOOK UP AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS.

The future is full of sunshine. Behind its dark clouds are rays of glory. These rays break out of their hiding-places and shine unobstructed over all.

“ *When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*”—LUKE xxi. 28.

THE things that are to come to pass we read of in the chapters of ancient prophecy; the lessons that the prediction and prospect of these things should teach us, I will now endeavour to impress. Our logic draws very often wrong conclusions. God states what will be, and we exclaim, in terror, How dreadful! Jesus, who predicts what will be in his sermon on the Mount, prescribes: “Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” We are sure, therefore, that our logic must be wrong; the inferences of Him who spake as never man spake, who lived as never man lived, who died as never man died, and who reasoned as never philosopher reasoned, must be always and everywhere perfectly right. Then Christians who believe these things, hold, that the storm that sweeps the earth, and dismantles it of all its beauty—that the hurricane which loosens stars from their orbits and scatters them as the

leaves of a fig-tree are swept by the autumnal gale from its branches, can no more scathe them, than if, during the height of the hurricane, they were safe within the walls and under the sunshine of that Paradise which is one day to overtake the world and crown it with a glory with which it never commenced. The worst of the storms predicted by the prophet are to a Christian but the biting winds of March, very unpleasant; the descending showers of April, very frequent; but both, nevertheless, the tokens of the approaching everlasting summer. They are at their worst the loud, but not equivocal accents that already begin to be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." By a chemistry the most remarkable, a Christian draws sunshine from the bosom of the darkest cloud, refreshment from the hard rock, and bright hopes from dark prospects; and where the world hangs its head, and droops, and desponds, and despairs, and begs that it may not hear of these things any more, the Christian listens to the storm, and feels like the man within the well-roofed and the well-built house, perfect security—he looks up to the everlasting hills, from whence cometh his aid—he lifts up his head, for the judgments that sweep the earth are but the harbingers of that morning that is soon to break upon it. It is after his prediction of similar judgments that our Lord introduces these cheering words. Let us carefully note what precedes the words of encouragement. Jesus tells us, among other things that shall take place, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations." That word "distress" is a most expressive one; it is the translation of a Greek word that denotes "compression:" it denotes inability to act or to discover

an exit from complications and difficulties. It is that state of things in which nations, to use a common phrase, will be at their wits' end. In one we shall find the exhaustion of its exchequer; in another rising turbulence and disloyalty; in another fears of an invasion that may be real, they know not whence, they know not why, and they know not how; in another resistance to all internal arrangements; in all, cabinet, congress, parliament, divan, feeling, in lesser or greater intensity, the fulfilment of the prediction, "distress of nations." Our Lord adds also, "with perplexity;" perplexity, not knowing how to get out of this distress, what measures to adopt. Like the Israelites of old, if they go forward, the great deep, and unfathomed ocean is ready to engulf them; if they turn back, the devouring sword of the Egyptians is unsheathed to destroy them; while the nations of the earth at the time predicted, now or near shall, unlike the Israelites in their distress, refuse to stand still, and see the salvation of our God. Another predicted condition stated by our Lord is, "the sea and the waves roaring." In prophecy the sea and the waves denote peoples, nations, kindreds, tongues. The idea, therefore, is the sea of democracy, or peoples, shall be stirred to its very depths; nations will be convulsed, capitals disturbed, and rulers and magistrates at their wits' end; and finally, to use the words of our Lord, "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." I do not say that these things are now fully actualized; or that any experience of the present exhausts these sublime predictions; but every one that reads them must believe, if he believe God's word, that some day what is now recorded as simple prediction shall be reduced

into literal fact, and that the historian of the future shall record as the scenes of the past what the prophet has predicted as God's threatenings of what is to come upon the earth.

But what I wish to impress is less the predictions, and more the feelings with which we should meet or anticipate them. Men's hearts may fail; but a Christian, the instant his heart begins to fail, expresses what is his happy and sunny creed, "My heart fainteth, and my flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever and ever." When the ocean begins to boil, agitated from its depths by some subterranean and mysterious force; when the stars begin to be eclipsed, and the sun and moon to be shrouded, and to gather paleness, the nerve of the Christian may shrink; like the nerve of a worldling; but the Christian has a retreat of confidence and rest; his is the anchorage-ground on which he can safely ride out the storm and defy the hurricane; his is the refuge and the sure retreat into which he can flee, and feel that though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, yet they cannot touch him; he can look from his sheltered anchorage-ground upon the drift of broken dynasties, the wreck of shattered thrones, the destruction of all that man loves and upon the approach of all that man fears, and like Martin Luther in scenes of similar, if not so severe trial, he can say, It is time now to sing the 46th Psalm: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river,

the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."

The Christian is told, when these things predicted by Isaiah, and in more compressed, not less emphatic, words pronounced by our Lord, shall come to pass—to look up. Why? Because his redemption draweth nigh. But is not a Christian already redeemed? Perfectly true. "Ye are redeemed not with gold and silver, nor any such corruptible things, but with the precious blood of a Lamb without spot and without blemish." Then in what sense does a Christian's redemption draw nigh? I answer, You have in grace the price of all; it is only in glory that you have the actual purchase of all. A Christian now is as much justified as he ever will be. As far as your title to heaven is concerned, you will never be clothed with a purer or a more perfect righteousness. A Christian at this moment clothed in Christ's righteousness is so just in the sight of a holy God, that the eyes of Omniscience can see no stain and detect no flaw. There is no future or possible increase of justification; you will not be more justified to-morrow than you are to-day. Justification is a forensic term: if a criminal be acquitted to-day, he is not more acquitted to-morrow than he is to-day. Acquitted and absolved, he is perfectly free, as far as the charge laid to him is concerned. If you be Christians now, you are perfectly justified; you have transferred to Christ, the Substitute, all your sins, and He has borne the penalty of them all, and He has transferred to you his glorious righteousness, and you are entitled to the purchase of it all. It is strictly and literally true, "There is no condemnation

to them that are in Christ Jesus." But while all this is true, and in this sense and to this extent a Christian is redeemed, yet the full realization of all the results of that redemption is only in reversion. Though justified from the curse, he feels within him the remains of sin; though God's final absolution has been pronounced from the skies, and never can be reversed, yet he feels in his heart a law that wars against the law of his spirit; so that when he would do good, evil is present with him, and the evil that he would not, that he does, and the good that he would he does not; and therefore it is his grief that sin prevails against him, but it is his peace that iniquity shall not have dominion over him. The nearer that you approach the confines of the everlasting rest—the more clearly that your eye catches the rays of the approaching glory—the nearer the time when all this troubled surf shall lie still in the calm and peaceful bay that is to be: the less distant the day when all these discords shall be resolved into the everlasting harmony of heaven, the nearer is your investiture with all that Christ has purchased for you, and your enjoyment of that perfect deliverance from all sin, which troubles you. Therefore, when these things begin to come to pass, it is not your ruin, nor your destruction, but your redemption, in all its weight, magnificence, and glory, that is just about to overtake you. But in another sense, too, the Christian's redemption draweth nigh. Whilst he is justified from all the curse that the law denounces against sin, and whilst he is sure to-day of what is in reversion for ever, he, like the rest of mankind, is also the child of sorrow, suffering, grief, bereavement, and pain. What home is there into which some dim shadow of the lost or those

gone before does not creep at Christmas eve? What house has not one vacant chair? What flock is there out of which one lamb has not been taken? Who and where can he be found who is not acquainted with sorrow? To-day the storm sets upon your home, scatters all its best and its brightest things, and you sit like the patriarch upon his eastern plain, desolate and brokenhearted, crushed in spirit, and almost tempted to curse God and die. To-morrow, your children are smitten by the death-frost, and like the young spring buds in the bleak March wind, they wither and leave you. Yet, blessed hope, they are only transferred from your cold garden to grow in a brighter and heavenly one. Next day sickness settles in your frame—for a Christian is no more exempt from sickness than other people—and your strength is wasted as a garment by a moth. Another day you are reproached, reviled, and you feel grieved and pained. And when you look around you, and see others suffering, you deeply sympathise with them, and long, and yearn, and pray for that day, that blessed day, that will break from the bosom of the fierce storm and the black night, in which there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor sickness; but all things shall be made new, and the ardent hopes of centuries shall be the joyous possession of all the people of God. Thus, when these things begin to come to pass, a Christian feels that they are the precursors of the hour of everlasting deliverance; that the darker the night the nearer is the morning. And by a strange power which the Spirit of God gives him, the Christian draws hope from tribulation; he hears the Master's voice and footsteps in the midst of the reverberating storm; he sees the lights of heaven

through the rifts in the fleecy clouds; and where the world discovers only unmitigated woe, and sinks into despair, the Christian beholds the rainbow span the sky that gives to him the blessed token of the departing storm, and the near approach of the everlasting sunshine.

But a Christian is not only liable to sin and sorrow. He must one day turn his face to the wall, and in the language applied to the patriarchs of old, give up the ghost and die. It is, therefore, a joyous hope that, in the good time coming, there will be no more death. Satan shall be deprived of his spoils, the grave shall be rifled of its dearest and its most precious possessions; death itself shall be denuded of its sting; and then shall be brought to pass—for it is not now brought to pass—the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” It must be to a Christian an intense delight to look forward to a time when those grand predictions of a joy to be revealed shall all become facts. And if it be true that the 34th of Isaiah is the description of the last storm, and that the 35th of Isaiah is the description of the dawn of the everlasting morn, soon after the 34th becomes the experience of mankind, the 35th will become the history of the world, and the happy enjoyment of all them that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such are the feelings that Christians ought to entertain in the prospect of the things that are coming on the earth. Thus the objection that we sometimes hear, that those things predicted by Peter, prophesied in the Book of Revelation, proclaimed in the chapters of ancient prophecy, are so awful and so terrible, that it would be prudent and discreet not to read them at all, is, in the first place;

utterly untenable. A Christian reads the whole Bible; and from each and all he derives intensity to his hope of approaching glory. He may lament that such catastrophes should be necessary; but he knows they cannot touch him. In the exercise of a moral chemistry, exclusively his own, he extracts sunshine from the storm, refreshment from the cloud, and hope where the world sees only despair.

"The night brings forth the morn,
Of the cloud is the lightning born;
From out the darkest earth
The brightest roses grow.
Bright sparks from black flint fly,
And from out the leaden sky
Comes the silvery-footed spirit of the snow."

The Christian gathers out of all these prospective or present troubles, one lesson: "Look up; lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." People often settle down into a conviction, which is a most unjust one, that all things are as they were meant to be, and that this world is quite natural. They say it is natural that people should be ill; natural that there should be war; natural that people should die; and that there should be police, and gaols, and soldiers, and prisoners, and battles. I maintain that none of these are in the least degree natural; they are most abnormal, most unnatural. We were never made to die; we were made and meant by God to be holy, and to be happy, and to live in this once beautiful earth for ever and ever. This is our natural state. Our present state is unnatural: our condition is that of patients in an hospital, not of children in their everlasting and happy home. But this world, in its worst estate, is an hospital; and thus, if it reminds

us of suffering, it reminds us also of cure; and our worst condition is that we are patients; but if patients, we are patients in hope of certain and sure restoration. If we feel that such is our condition now, how must we long for that day when all that is natural shall return; when the beauty and the blessedness of Eden shall not be the poet's dream, nor the dim reminiscence of humanity, but the actual enjoyment and the happy possession of all mankind; when we shall no longer be patients in an hospital, but kings and priests unto our God and to his Christ for ever and ever; when the groans of creation shall cease; when the curse that lies upon it like an incubus shall be removed; when its very deserts shall rejoice, and its solitary places shall blossom like the rose; when the very winds shall all make music, and the chimes of the waves shall mingle with their harmony; and there shall be no cloud, and no shadow, and all traces of the grave shall be effaced, and all memorials of tears shall be expunged; and a rejoicing heaven shall look down and fold in its soft embraces a happy earth; and all things shall be made new, and former things, so far as sinful and sad, for ever shall have passed away. Such is the scene before us, such the blessed hope. The wonder is, that the patient is so contented with his bed in the hospital; that man is so satisfied to be where he is, and what he is. It is either because he does not know anything better, or because he won't entertain the thought of anything better; or because the Bible is a strange book, and the romance and the silly novel a familiar and a favoured one. If you will open this sacred book you will see that for every shadow that darkens the earth now, there is a glorious sunshine beyond; that for every line of suffering that is graven

on it here, there is a parallel, though often overlooked, line of glory; and that when the night shall become darkest, and the chill shall be coldest, and men's hearts shall fail them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth, at that very hour the Bridegroom stands ready to descend, the bride waits in her bridal robes, in her coronation garments; and in the beautiful language of the Apocalypse, rejoiceth, for the marriage of the Lamb is come. The fact is, if we lived less in the present, and lived a vast deal more in the future, we should be happier than we are now. We have nothing to do with the present, but to conquer its temptations, to beat down its evils, to fulfil our duties to our God, and our obligations to all mankind. But when I want to be refreshed, when I want to be cheered and brightened, I do not open a silly novel, and read an airy, baseless vision, which has no substance, and can, therefore, communicate no real joy: I open those grand prophecies, those bright predictions of futurity; and whilst I seek strength from heaven to enable me to fulfil life's duties and to bear life's trials, I draw sunshine from the illuminated future, to irradiate my steps, and cheer me as I beat my path through the desert of this world to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Whenever you stand in need of joy, remember where the fountain is on which you may draw; whenever you want to be happy, open the page of prophecy. You must not, however, let me add, confound two things that differ. People sometimes take their duties from prophecy; that is to misuse it. My duties are to come from God's precepts; my enjoyments, my hopes, my happiness, are to flow from God's prophecies. You must not quote a prophecy for the fulfilment of a

duty; and you must not quote a precept in order to get happiness from it, for a precept is often a burdensome and a heavy thing. It is by confounding these two that people fall into all sorts of mistakes. For instance, if I believed and felt, what I cannot venture to affirm, that a few more years are to close this present economy; and that the awful scenes in the 34th of Isaiah are within a few years of passing into facts; if I could predict that, which I do not dare to predict, that would not in the least affect my duties. When I want to know the duty I owe to my God, the duty I owe to my sovereign, the duties I owe to my friends, my flock, my brethren, my neighbours, I never think of looking into prophecy, I read the precepts: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." Suppose I were persuaded of the nearness and the instance of these things—and they may be much nearer than we dream—yet my duties remain. The prediction of Christ is, "Two shall be grinding at the mill," that is, people shall be fulfilling the duties of life; "one shall be taken, and the other shall be left."

The command of Christ to every one is, "Occupy till I come." Therefore, if I am persuaded that a few years will wind up this present economy—a soldier, I would not leave my regiment; a member of parliament, I would not resign my seat; a tradesman, I would not leave my shop; a sailor, I would attend to my duties. We are always safe in the path of duty. Wherever God in his providence places you, there and nowhere else are you to seek to glorify Him, and to obey his will, and to fulfil your obligations. The post of duty is holier than altar or shrine—it is the holiest place in

Christendom. It is by the Gentiles confounding these two things that the Jews, for instance, have been so maltreated. If you were to ask the Pope of Rome, who treats the Jews like beasts of burden in the horrible Ghetto in which he shuts them up in his Christian charity, Why do you treat these poor, wretched Jews so? what would be his answer? Does not prophecy say they are to be smitten, and beaten, and spit upon, and made a scoff and a byword among all nations? and, therefore, when I beat the Jews, and shut them up in dens worse than pig-sties, I am fulfilling prophecy. My answer to the Pope, if he would receive any word from me, would be this: Your duties to mankind must spring from the precepts of God, which command mercy, and charity, and loving-kindness, and justice; and to quote the predictions of what shall befall the Jew as the reasons why you are to inflict this punishment upon him, is to forget that God reserves to himself to fulfil his prophecies, and orders you to take care to obey his precepts. Let us then turn to prophecy for enjoyment, and quote precepts for duty; and recollect that whatever be the predictions of the future, however dark, ominous, and pregnant with disaster, its good not its evil is for us. Noah lamented that so many would be overwhelmed in the flood, but as he sat in the ark, careering on the tempestuous waves, and heard the hailstones patter on its roof, and felt the roll and pitch of the gigantic waves, he never feared; he knew he was perfectly safe; that the flood could no more upset and destroy that ark than it could upset the throne of God. So it is with the Christian. When the manslayer was in the city of refuge, he knew that the avenger, that

had pursued him, might kill him, for he had strength, and he had weapons, and he had hate; but he knew that by a law greater than that, he dare not; and that all the force of the city of refuge would be enlisted on his side, for his protection. So is it with you. When these things begin to come to pass, remember you are in the ark, the waves cannot touch nor overwhelm you; you are in the city of refuge, the pursuer cannot smite you; for I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate the humblest Christian now or ever from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then "look up, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

LECTURE 'X.

THE DAY OF THE LORD.

Multitudes expect no day of the Lord. They deprecate all allusion of it. Their hearts are wholly in the present.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."—2 PETER iii. 10.

THE idea expressed by the apostle is, that the last day of this present Christian economy will come sudden and unexpected on the earth as a thief breaks into a house in the silence of the night, when none are prepared to repel him, because none expect to be assailed. You must detach all idea of sinfulness in the thief, and retain only the idea of unpreparedness in the inhabitant whose house the thief breaks into. We are taught in this passage, first of all, the suddenness with which Christ will come to our world. Paul says in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, that when he comes it will be "sudden destruction" upon them that neither know, nor love, nor expect him. To the last the world will repudiate all idea of this world having a close. Those clouds that are the harbingers of storm will be explained away as every day's ordinary phenomena; the eddying straws that show how the wind blows, and are here pre-significant and premonitory, they will despise; warnings

addressed to the world, imploring it to make ready for the crisis, will be treated as the anile appeals of fanaticism, or the expressions of drivelling folly, to be disregarded by sane and prudent minds; till at last the full weight of that day falls upon thousands like an alpine avalanche on the plain, overwhelming, crushing, destroying.

The second idea conveyed is not only that of unexpectedness, but also of unpreparedness. The appeal of the day, the trumpet summons of this moment that every one should hear as no uncertain sound is, "Prepare, O Israel, to meet thy God." Whether Christ comes to you in the day of the Lord, or you are called to Him at the close of the day of grace, you are equally under the obligation to make some preparation in some sense or in some shape, or by some described discipline, for so great and so stupendous an event. What if that day should overtake you, with its descending dark, silent night, when you find your lamps gone out, the oil that is in them utterly consumed, and no means left of replenishing them in that hurricane which shall sweep the earth, and in that night which shall overshadow with its sable wings the wide world of mankind? Another idea suggested by the simile is that of great loss. The thief breaks into the house unexpectedly, and therefore you are unprepared to meet him; and therefore you suffer the loss of those things that the thief carries away. When the day of the Lord comes, there will be great loss; but what loss? The loss of wealth is nothing; the loss of health is a sad thing, but it is not a finally fatal thing; the loss of your good name may be retrieved; but the loss of that day will be far greater. The discovery will then be made that the soul is lost, and its salvation for ever impossible.

And what a loss is that! In the words of Robert Hall: "What if it were possible to cover the earth with sackcloth, and the ocean with crape, and the sky with mourning; would it be possible for Nature to utter a groan too deep or a cry too piercing to express the magnitude of such a catastrophe?" Or in the still sublimer language of Scripture: "What shall it profit a man if"—and it is only an *if*—"if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Behold what a frightful discovery! The sun of all privilege is set, the day of grace is closed, the day of retribution has overtaken us; in the awful but expressive language of the prophet, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended; and," terrible discovery, "we are not saved." I need not tell you that no loss can equal that loss. Just as life is the most precious thing on earth, and as every man will give anything to save his life; so the most precious thing in the world to come is that soul which if lost is lost for ever and ever. In most terrestrial losses that we encounter upon earth there are some relieving lights and consolations. If, for instance, a person loses the wealth that he has accumulated by the industry of years, that wealth and more he may recover by the intenser industry of years to come; or if he lose by sickness the health that in this world is the highest and the happiest of all earthly possessions, he may by the skill of his physician, by care, by prudence, by temperance, recover all his health again. But if any man lose in the day of the Lord—the day that closes all grace, and commences only glory or gloom for ever—his immortal precious soul, it is a loss that he never can recover: no time and no exertions will enable him to do so. There is no proof that a

future rainbow will span the concave of the lost; or that a single interposing angel of mercy will descend to its depths in pursuit of the victims that are there; or that the gospel in any sense or shape will be preached there; and therefore the loss is irrecoverable, irretrievable, final, and for ever. If such be the fact, should any man cherish one moment's happiness till he has some reason for believing that there is a better prospect for that soul than the world generally entertains? Is it common sense for any man to try to get rich, or to become learned, or powerful, or celebrated, while he leaves unsettled this most momentous of all questions that can agitate the human heart, or employ human investigation—is there an eternity to come or is this life the end of me? Do I, when I descend into the grave, not merely cease to be seen, but cease to be? If this be fact, and you can prove it, then all my preaching is vain, and all Scripture is written in vain. But it is not fact, the reverse is fact: even nature teaches immortality; and the very idea that you and a dog are to lie down in the same grave, and experience the same annihilation, revolts the instincts of our nature, and seems to us the most horrible of all things; for fearful as hell is, annihilation is something no less so. All the instincts of our nature shrink and recoil from it in horror. If, then, the grave is not the end of us, but only the great wardrobe of the world, in which the body is folded up as a garment used, to be restored, and refitted, and rebeautified; and the very instant that you die, that instant the soul, with the speed with which the lightning leaps from the black cloud, alights in the presence of God in happiness, or in the presence of the devil in misery; then I do say

those men are irrational, and cannot be in their senses, who settle all problems but this; who never ask this plain, this pressing, this instant question, What is to be the end of me? Am I to be annihilated? Am I to be happy? Am I to be miserable? Am I to descend into the depths of that place where God has forgotten to be gracious? or is my movement to be upward into that glory which eye hath not seen, and heart in its happiest imaginations hath not conceived? If I speak what is true in these plain words in which I clothe my thoughts, I ask you to entertain this question; I ask you as your first, most pressing, most paramount interest, to entertain this question. It should not be adjourned for a single day; it should not be put off for a single hour. If the way to settle it were painful—if the process were long—if the prescription from the great pharmacopœia of heaven were a nauseous and protracted one, I could feel for you; we might wait. But the prescription is plain; the interests involved are gigantic; the issues are unspeakably solemn. Two eternities fight for each spirit on earth. Let us determine that if we shall be lost, it will be at the feet of Him who came to save; that if our souls perish, it must be because Christ's mercy is finite, or Christ's atonement inadequate; not because we have refused to cast ourselves at his feet, and lay upon Him who is mighty to bear it, the whole stress and pressure of our eternal destiny. Not only is this loss irretrievable, but there is no possible compensatory element that comes into play to mitigate the intensity or lighten the darkness of that terrible loss. If one lose one's eyesight, the hearing becomes more exquisitely acute; and hence the blind are often the best musicians. If

one lose one's hearing and sight together, by a beautiful compensatory law the touch becomes more exquisite; so that the touch of a deaf and blind man is almost as acute and sensitive as the eye and the ear; it becomes a sort of prolonged sight and hearing. If I lose my riches, friends are raised up who sympathise with me and for me. If we lose our nearest and our dearest ones, hopes that stretch beyond the grave lighten its gloom, and shine in upon our hearts. There is not a loss in this world for which there is not some compensatory element instantly or remotely attending it. But if you lose the soul, there is no compensatory element in reserve; there is no counteracting thought that can lighten the calamity, or mitigate the loss, or dispel that gloom, or stifle that remorse which is the awful suffering of the worm that never dies, the effect of the fire that is never, never quenched. Well, then, should the day of the Lord come—and, mark you, the whole of the reasoning in the apostolic scriptures is based invariably upon the supposition that it is at your doors—are you ready? “The Lord is at hand.” In the New Testament we never find any motives, or at least very few, if any, drawn from the prospect of death. Death is ignored in the New Testament; it is scarcely supposed to be; it is from this life to the higher life, or from this world to the lower world; the leap from the one to the other is not interrupted by the grave, the valley of the shadow of death, that lies between them. Now if that day of the Lord should be near—and it must be 1800 years nearer than it was in the days of Paul or of Peter—and if there should soon burst upon the world, with lightning speed and splendour, the dawn of that morn; if the

reverberation of the last trump should some day, and it will be heard one day—the certainty of it is no question, the time of it may be—break upon the world's dead ear, echoing through the graves of the dead and among the homes of the living; if the Son of man shall come—and the certainty of it we know, the time of it we do not know; but it is nearer to-day than it was yesterday, as it will be nearer to-morrow than it is to-day—what a solemn thought that only two great and opposite divisions of mankind will be found then and there, and in one or other of them you and I must be found also! For what does the apostle say? “To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.” When He comes, what does He do? “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; but when He comes, it will be “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day.” In which of these classes will you be? That is the most momentous question, and involves the prior question, Is your soul saved or not saved? I fear, many have a notion that in order to condemn themselves for ever they must perpetrate some atrocious crime. This is a mistake. We are born on the downward road that leads to ruin; we are born under a curse, and in an eclipse; we are already lost. What is wanted is, not to do something to be lost, that is already done; but what is needed is, either to do, or know, or learn, or see something by which and according to which we can be saved with an everlasting salvation.

Having seen the solemnity of the interests involved, let me try to explain what are the grounds on which men ignore or despise these solemn interests; and in consequence of which the day of the Lord comes upon them as a thief in the night. The very first reason of all is worldliness; that is to say, they are too absorbed in the thoughts, the cares, and anxieties of this present world. It may be refined worldliness; it may be intellectual worldliness; it may exist under a monk's hood, or under a judge's ermine; it may be in a palace; it may be in a court; it may be in a hut; it may be in a sheiling,—it is still worldliness. It is not necessarily extravagance, pomp, splendour, show; it may be intensest where there is least of show, or the greatest affectation of humility; and it may be least where there is splendid show, and no expressed affectation of humility at all. It is what I may call the tap-root on which grows, and from which springs, a thousand vices. The worldliness that is the central passion develops itself in different forms, according to men's different constitutions. In one man, worldliness, the root, has for its special fruit avarice; in another man, it brings forth profligacy; in another man, sensuality; in another drunkenness; in another, betting, gambling, extravagance, dishonesty, excess. All these are merely the fruits of one central passion, the branches of one deep-seated root in the human heart, which I have expressed by one word—worldliness,—the lust of the eye, the pride of life, the love of this present evil world. Worldliness in things that are not sinful is often the most perilous and destructive of all. For instance, business is a necessity; diligence in business is a duty; and the man that neglects his business, in

order to distribute tracts, has not read his Bible in the right light, nor exercised common sense while he did so. I repeat, business is a duty; diligence in business is no less a duty; but when the business so absorbs the mind, that as long as there is a business advertisement in the "Times" you cannot spare a moment to read a text in the Bible; that as long as you have an interest afloat upon the ocean you cannot entertain a question about the soul, about God, about judgment to come, so long business, which is lawful, diligence in business, which is duty, becomes, in your case, an absorbing passion, exhausting all the affections of your heart; and you are going down to your Egypt for help, and trusting in it instead of trusting in God, the living God.

I do not say, that this deep interest I have tried to teach, in the importance and preciousness of the soul, is to supersede everything. It must not do that; it must not be the exclusive interest; but it must be the dominant and great interest, the settlement of which ought to be instant, the adjournment of which is the height of folly, as it is the height of sin. Has worldliness in your heart developed itself into any of these evil appetites, passions, or desires? or has the worldliness in your heart taken the more dangerous shape, a shape in which the devil's success is greater than in any other, that of excessive attachment to that which is lawful? I believe, for one soul that downright sin and wickedness destroy, there are thousands that excessive attachment to things in themselves perfectly lawful destroys. The moment that any one thing becomes so absorbing in your thoughts that it excludes all others, and prevents the settlement of others, and

detaches you from all concern about the soul, about the Saviour, about a judgment-seat, and the day of the Lord, about interests that ought to be instant, immediate, everlasting; that moment, what in itself is lawful, and in its place dutiful, becomes, in your case, poison, idolatry, destruction.

Another reason why men are not impressed by the thought of that day overtaking them, is not only worldliness, but, as the apostle himself says, science, falsely so called. What does he tell us at the very beginning of this chapter? That there shall come scoffers in the last days, who will plead the continuity of the laws of nature as just reasons why they may calculate upon that continuity for ever and ever. The reasoning of these pseudo-philosophers is this: they say, we find nature governed by fixed laws; we find the tides rise and fall according to the action of the sun and moon upon them; we find the earth revolves upon its axis, and sweeps round in its orbit, under an impulse originally given it: and what they argue, therefore, or rather what they most unscientifically infer, is this: as the earth has always revolved on its axis, it will always do so; as the earth has always completed its orbit in a year, it will always move in its orbit; as the flowers have burst into bloom every year, they will always bloom. All things continue now as they have been; therefore, argue these sceptic philosophers, all things will continue for ever as they have been. But is there not here a very radical mistake? Suppose the earth revolves on its axis because it received originally an impulse from God; suppose it moves in its orbit because God projected it exactly as a boy throws a marble from his hand; yet we know that by

the law of dynamics all forces, unless kept up, must ultimately exhaust themselves. If you set a wheel revolving, it will revolve as long as the impulse lasts; it gradually becomes slower and slower, and then stops. Now, if God gave this orb its impulse on its axis, and in its orbit, that impulse either will cease by exhaustion, or it will be continued as often as He renews it; but in both cases it is not the law of nature, but it is the Lawgiver that keeps all things as they were from the beginning. The Lawgiver has stepped out of the province of creation, and has proclaimed in his word, with all the clearness of an oracle, that the day comes when the impulse shall cease, when the touch of his finger shall be withdrawn, and when the earth will rest on its axis, and the flaming fire will melt its elements as with fervent heat, and all its contents shall be burned up, and all things shall be made new; and "the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know Him not." To argue that the future will be the repetition of the past, is to argue illogically; for the God that formed the earth, and whose touch gives it its every impulse, has declared that one day this economy shall cease; and that the day shall come, unexpected by the mass of mankind, like a thief in the night; and that the unbelieving, and the unsanctified, and the unregenerate, shall perish from before his presence, and that for ever.

In the words of a most eminent writer, the Rev. Mr. Birks, the rector of Kelshal: "In the day of grace there is a reserve of righteous anger against sin, which finds at present no full expression; but that righteous anger is gathering up even now, like a treasury of electric fire, and must one day burst out in open judg-

ment before the moral equilibrium can be restored, and a morning without clouds dawn upon our weary and our wicked world." But scientific men are prone to ignore these things,—for if you speak to some of them about this world being changed, about its being burnt up with fire,—if you quote the very words of Peter,—you have no idea with what contempt some of them will listen. If you close-question them, and ask them why, the only answer they give is the answer that they gave in Peter's days: "All things have always gone on till now, and we think the old machine will go on a good deal longer; and, at all events," they say, with sceptic scorn and apathy, "it will last our day." They forget that they are just the very people who are signs of the certain nearness of that event: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But what is very sad, this tendency to scientific opposition to the very thought of things coming to an end exerts a prodigious effect upon true Christians; unconsciously it may be, but really, notwithstanding, it influences us. We say, Well, we believe that the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire; that the elements shall melt with fervent heat; that the earth, and the things that are therein, shall be burned up; we believe that the Lord will come in just judgment upon the wicked, and to be admired and glorified in all his own people; but some way or another, we won't believe it is either near, or probably near, or possibly near; we adjourn it, just as we adjourn the day of death, into the remote and distant future; and, as all men believe all men mortal but themselves, so we

believe, that though that day will come, it is so infinitely remote from the scenes and the circumstances in which we play our part, that we ought to ignore it altogether, and treat it as a distant contingency, which some remote generation may peradventure see. But the Bible does not so speak." It constantly speaks of it as at hand ; it constantly speaks of the duty of making ready for that day ; it says: "Be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh;" it addresses you, "Prepare to meet thy God;" it speaks of that day as close at hand, and warns every one to watch the signs and tokens of its approach, that it may not find you sleeping in apathy, the oil spent, the lamps extinguished, and the blackness of everlasting night the only possible result.

But it is remarkable, that this expression, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," refers exclusively to those who reject the Saviour, and have no union with Him, vital and saving; whilst those who are true Christians are constantly referred to as not overtaken by that day as by a thief in the night. The words of the apostle are, for instance: "Of the times and the seasons ye have no need that I write unto you; for"—he is now speaking to Christians—"ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night;" that is the symbol by which it is generally illustrated. "For when they shall say," not when *you* shall say—he writes to Christians—"when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." But mark what he adds in the 4th verse: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day ; we are not of the night, nor of the darkness." Then all I have said in this chapter relates to the unconverted, to the children of darkness, who will be overtaken by that day as a thief in the night. But, now what I say to you, the children of light, is: "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief;" on the contrary, you know the Saviour, and you are looking for his advent ; and the lesson to be drawn from that is, let us not sleep. We may not be ignorant, we may not be insensible, but we may fall into a disastrous and perilous sleep ; and therefore, says the apostle, let us watch, and be sober. And if we notice what is said, in connexion with that day, throughout the Bible, we shall be struck with the descriptions of the attitude that Christians sustain in relation to it. They are represented as looking for his return. In Philippians iii. 20: "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." In Titus ii. 13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." They are represented again in Corinthians as waiting for Him, "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." They are represented in Thessalonians as being perfect in every good thing, and waiting for their Lord from heaven. Therefore, this text, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," is a solemn warning to the world ; but it does not refer to the Christian. You expect the dawn of that day ; you look for the rise of that glorious sun. "Unto you that look for Him, He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation ;" and you look

for Him, and hail the rising of that morning star, because of what follows. He comes to dissolve the earth, to introduce that sublime regeneration which makes all things new. Nobody, surely, could be very sorry were this earth restored to its Eden beauty, fertility, and glory. He comes also to raise your dead; those you committed to the grave amid tears, and with breaking hearts and trembling hands, will be raised. And hence the nearer that that day comes, the sacred seer in Patmos tells us, the more blessed are they that die. These words we often quote, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," but we often omit, "from henceforth." For, you will notice that this passage comes in just upon the eve of Christ's return; and the apostle says, While they are always blessed that die in the Lord, yet blessed are they that die in the Lord from henceforth. Why? Because they will only have to sleep a few short years in the grave before they are awakened by the roll of the resurrection trumpet; and this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible incorruptibility. The Christian looks for that day, because all the living shall be changed. There are none who would not be willing to part with aches, and griefs, and tears, and the wrinkles of old age, and the gray hairs that become white as the light of eternity shines upon them, and all the ills and sorrows that flesh is heir to. Then why should anybody dread the arrival of that day when immortal youth, and yet perfect identity; when entire health and happiness shall be our heritage and our enjoyment for ever and ever? The dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible; the living in Christ shall be changed. And, therefore if that day should be near, as the most reflecting and the

most thoughtful minds think, there may be among my readers some that will never die. Whether you are to be among them or not, I cannot say; but there will be a generation at that day of Christians who will never die. We shall not all die, but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall all be changed; for this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility. But the Christian longs for that day. The man of sin will be destroyed. The Pope, who I believe is the head of that apostasy, is not yet to be destroyed. There is a great deal of wicked vitality in that system still. He is destined to be destroyed only when Christ comes, "whom he will consume with the spirit of his mouth," a consumption that has been steadily going on from 1792, when it began, onward to the present year; but the last quivering spectre of the system will remain, its ruling passion strong in death, and it will only be finally and wholly destroyed by the personal appearance and brightness of the Redeemer's advent. And then also at that day will be manifested all the sons of God. At present, God's children are hidden; some are obscured by poverty, some by prejudices and imperfections; there are a thousand things that make God's people his hidden ones. But at that day there shall be the manifestation of the sons of God. Then will be seen the true church. Men are constantly trying to create a true church upon earth. No such thing is possible. The purest church in this world is simply a recruiting-station for the true church that is to be; it is merely a provisional arrangement till the perfect church comes. But when that day dawns, then the perfect church will be disclosed; the whole company of

the sons of God shall be manifest. And at that day we shall see Him as He is; we shall be like Him; and Him whom by faith we have seen, and whom, though we see Him not by sight, yet we love, we shall then see Him as he is, no longer through a glass darkly. And at that day, too, we shall find that, as there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ now, so there will be no separation for his people from Christ.

I ask, seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be? We stand, each of us, upon an isthmus between two great eternities, wasted by the waters of the past, and washed by the ocean of the future. We know not at what day that great sea may overwhelm and engulf all. But of this we may be assured, that that mother's son who is now in Christ, leaning on his precious sacrifice, washed in his atoning blood, clad in his glorious righteousness, is safe—he may fail, and so far he does fail, in thinking of the crowned Christ to come; but he does not fail, and therefore his safety is secure, come what may, because resting on a crucified Christ that has come; and justified, and forgiven, and accepted of God, he will rejoice at that day.

LECTURE XI.

PROPHETIC DATES AND OUR STUDY OF THEM.

Dates are constantly given in the Scriptures. They mete out the future as well as the past. What God has inspired for our learning we may meekly and humbly study.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”—2 PETER iii. 8.

It may be perfectly true that the thought expressed by the apostle here is that in the estimate of Him whose measure is infinity, whose duration is eternity, a thousand years are less, far less, than one day is in the estimate of man; that is to say, that a thousand years bears an infinitely less proportion to an eternal duration than a single day bears to the lifetime of man, though it extend to seventy, eighty, or even a hundred years. But it has been adduced by writers on the prophetic dates as a probable or presumptive proof of what is proved to be otherwise certain, that each day of the creation week was the miniature of a thousand years; that as six days were expended by the Creator in creating our world, and the seventh day was consecrated to be the sabbath or the rest; so six thousand years will be expended—a day for a thousand years—in

the government and working of the world, and the seventh thousand year shall be the sabbatical rest, what the apostle calls the *σαββατισμός*, the sabbath keeping, "that remaineth for the people of God," or what is more popularly called the millennium, or what will be the actualizing of the 21st and 22nd chapter of the book of Revelation. This part of its reference I shall not be able in this lecture to explain. But as a great deal of misapprehension exists on the subject of these calculations in prophecy—calculations which are not originated by the preacher, but often stated and inspired, surely for some purpose, in the word of God,—it seems very desirable that I should try—what I have never yet done in full—to lay before you an epitome or a summary of the various dates, where a prophetic day is made to represent a literal year; and show that all these great periods seem to cluster and to intersect at a period, whatever be its nature, accompaniments, or issues, not very many years distant from the year which is now running out. In order to do so, I will turn to the earliest of all. We read in Leviticus xxvi., verses 18, 21, 24, and 28, that God was to afflict, or to cause his people Israel to suffer what He calls "seven times." God declares on four different occasions, in the course of that 26th chapter, that He will afflict them "seven times." We cannot but feel suggested to our mind by this expression in Leviticus, the frequent reiteration of such words as these in the course of prophecy, "time, times, half a time;" "wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" "The Jews shall be trodden under foot," that is, God will afflict them, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." What were the times of the Gentiles? During these seven times God

threatens to afflict his people, Jerusalem is to be trodden under foot, and his ancient people to be a scoff and a byword; and at the end of these seven times, whatever they may mean, the Gentile oppression shall cease; God's forsaken but unforgotten race will emerge, return to Jerusalem, worship on Mount Sion, and Christ shall be manifested, and shine before his ransomed ancients gloriously. The next remarkable era we find in Daniel viii. 14, 2,300 days; beginning at the destruction of the ram, that is, the Persian empire, by the he goat, or the Greek; and at the end of that period exhausting itself; an epoch which I will endeavour to show when I come to treat of it alone. We find next what will confirm the solution of these dates, that a day means a year, by our investigation of the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy. As these 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy, contained in his 9th chapter, at the 27th verse, have already been fulfilled, we can prove that the prophet necessarily means a day for a year, that the 70 weeks are 70 times 7 days = 490 days prophetically, or literally 490 years. If I establish this, I have laid a basis on which I can solve and explain the other dates that are contained in these prophecies. In the fourth place, we have these words, "time, times, and half a time;" during which, says Daniel, in the 7th chapter of his prophecy, at the 25th verse, this great apostate power that he speaks of shall afflict God's people; this power that wears out the saints, that changes times and laws, about the application of which we can have no manner of doubt, shall dominate. Also he says that God's people shall be given to be crushed by him for "a time, times, and the dividing of times." And then at the end of this epoch, what-

ever be its duration, or whatever be the date of its exhaustion, we are told that the judgment shall sit, his dominion shall be taken away, and he will be consumed until the end, when he shall be utterly destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming. Now these are the words of Scripture. In connection with that "time, times, and half a time," we have in the book of Revelation several periods precisely the same, but differently expressed. Thus we read that the holy city, the picture of the true church, is to be trodden under foot forty and two months. Now if you multiply 42 by 30, you produce 1260 days. The expression is repeated, "I will give power to the two witnesses; they shall prophesy in sackcloth;" that is, as I have explained, the true church shall be depressed and crushed by this dominant power, "one thousand two hundred and three score days," that is, 1260 days. We read in the 12th chapter that the woman flees into the wilderness; that is, that the church of Christ, which it is easy to show, escapes into obscurity where she shall be nourished a thousand two hundred and three score days. If we take all these words, "time, times, and half a time," or 1260 days, or 42 months—we shall find they all denote one period; a time, 360 prophetic days, or full literal years; times, the double number, twice 360; and half a time, the half of 360; making exactly 1260 prophetic days, or 1260 literal and full chronological years. Thus we have before us all these dates, namely: "the time, times, half a time," the 42 months, the 1260 days, all denoting precisely the same thing. In Daniel, the 12th chapter, we read of 30 days added to the 1200, making 1230 days. He also speaks of a yet further period of 45 days added to the 1290; and he says that

that man will be blessed, or specially happy, or the possessor of great joy, who lives to the close of the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. Another prophetic number is the period when the Saracenic power was to execute judgment on Christendom, namely, five months. We have next "the hour, the day, the month, and the year," which we will also investigate. There is next the number 666 as the number of a man, the application of which is very clear. Lastly, we have the three and a half days after the death of the witnesses, during which they lie unburied on the street of the great city of Christendom, called Sodom, Egypt, or Rome. These dates, or calculations, the Spirit has inspired: we do not invent them. If we cannot fully remove every difficulty, it is our duty to do the best we can, and this is not little. There are some topics on which I can speak with the absolute conviction that I speak the very mind, and words, and truths of God; there are other topics more delicate, more intricate, on which one must speak with reserve; in discussing which it is possible one may be wrong, and in some instances it may be probable we have not arrived at the true solution. All I do is to attempt to explain for your comfort what is intensely interesting. As readers of the Bible you do not wish one book to be locked up. Its contents and meaning you are bound to study—you wish to have all the light cast upon it that is possible. The grounds on which I make my expositions are grounds accessible to you. If I were a Romish priest requiring you to put a padlock on your Bibles, and then tell you these solutions are absolute truths, it would be a very different thing. But in all I urge I appeal to what you hold in your hands; and the highest

compliment you can pay me, if I do not convince you, is to reject in a matter of this kind. If I do convince you, I think you are bound to accept, not because I say it, but because God has been pleased in his own word to reveal it.

I proceed a step further, in order to show how justified I am in interpreting a *day* in prophecy as a *year*. When one draws a plan of a farm, an estate, or houses, he draws it on canvas or on paper, and he writes below, on the scale of an inch for a mile; so that every inch on the plan represents a mile upon the literal estate. In the same way every day in these dates in the prophetic page represents a year in the currency of time and of the world. The evidence of this interpretation lies in such expressions as these. Moses, for instance, says: "All the *days* that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty *years*;" here days and years are used convertibly. Then Laban says to Jacob: "Fulfil her *week*; the service thou shalt serve will be yet *seven years*." Now seven years are called seven days; the seven days represent seven years. In Leviticus, again, we read: "Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years." He is speaking of the Jubilee; seven times-seven days make 49 days; but he calls them sabbaths, or weeks of years. The jubilee occurred every fiftieth year. And therefore, in these passages a day is taken strictly for a year. In Numbers xiv. 34: "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year," &c. The prophecy of Ezekiel, I think, is still more remarkable. Ezekiel is told by God, "Lie upon thy left side, for I have laid on thee the iniquity of the house of Israel, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; and when

thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquities of the house of Jacob forty days." Then what does he add? "I have appointed thee each day for a year." It seems to me nothing can be more conclusive; the prophet symbolically is made to lie on his side, to represent a national estate or condition; and God tells him expressly that each day of his personal reclining is to represent a year. I think, therefore, that Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Shimeall, Elliot, Bickersteth, and Villiers, are all justified in understanding, by a prophetic day, a literal year; and in interpreting these great dates to which I have called your attention, after the law which I have now endeavoured to lay down. But then it has been objected, at the very outset of such investigations, that God has expressly said to Daniel, "Shut up the words, and seal the book;" which means, it is not to be understood "even to the time of the end." This is perfectly true. The real question that remains is, Has the seal been broken? or are we trying, when we venture to explain these things, to break seals which God has not broken, to penetrate into mysteries which He has not explained, and to cast our inquiring glance into a future which God has sealed and shut up from the inspection and the penetration of the most gifted of mankind? If this be so, we are doing what is unquestionably wrong. But let us inquire, in the words of Scripture, "What or what manner of times the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory that should follow." Daniel's inhibition was clearly operative, when the apostle asked our Saviour, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom?" for his

answer was, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons." Mark the word *times* again; evidently referring to the times of the Gentiles in Leviticus, and the times of Daniel, "which the father has put in his own power; but power shall be given you from on high." He sends them, in other words, on their immediate mission. He does not rebuke them for their inquiry, as if it were an idle one; but he informs them that the seal was not yet broken, that they had a great and pressing work it was their duty to accept. But one apostle, we find, outlived the rest. John was banished a prisoner by Domitian to the isle of Patmos. We find that what the other apostles did not know, and what it was not for them to receive, was revealed expressly to John in Patmos. Referring to the very words of Daniel, "Seal the book, even to the time of the end;" the voice from heaven sounded in the ear of John, "Seal not the book; for the lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." What does this mean? That the sealing, which was the command in Daniel's days, was undone in John's day; and that we are warranted not in prophesying, which belongs to him that wears a prophet's mantle, and has a prophet's mission; but in explaining the prophecy not of a sealed but now an unsealed book, at the very commencement of which it is said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." Now so far then I justify the course I have taken.

Any attempt to unfold apocalyptic dates will appear intricate and difficult. But they are neither impenetrable nor improbable.

Let us now turn to the earliest dates in the 26th

chapter of Leviticus, at the 18th verse. God says, speaking to the Jews—and if you read the whole chapter at your leisure you will see he is speaking to them only—"If ye will not, yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins." Then in the 19th verse he states the date when the seven times, or the punishment, should begin. "I will break the pride of your power;" that is, you shall cease to be a nation. He repeats this phrase in the 24th verse: "Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins." And in the 28th verse he repeats the same: "And I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins." Now the question is, When and at what year did the seven times begin, and when and in what year do the seven times terminate? that is, When did the affliction on the Jews as a nation begin? and when, therefore, may we expect that infliction upon the Jews as a nation to cease? We find the announcement was made on the completion of the tabernacle, a year after the exodus; in *anno mundi*, that is, the year of the world 2,514. Then multiply 360 years by 7, that is, "a time," and you get the duration of God's affliction of the Jews by the Gentiles, or the times of the Gentiles, or the seven times suffering of the Jewish people. Multiply 360 by 7, and you have exactly 2,520 years. But when did these 2,520 years begin? God says at the time when He would "break the pride of their power." When did that take place? The ten tribes, we find, were made tributary after the dismemberment of the kingdom, under Rehoboam and Jeroboam; but the other two tribes retained their distinct and independent existence till the time of Manasseh. Now,

mark you, the captivity of Judah, under Manasseh, took place A.M. 3,480. If you add to 3,480, the year of the world, the period of time before Christ, 652; and if you will also add A.D., or the year 1868, it will make exactly 6,000 years—what are called the six days, or the 6,000 years that constitute the world's week, previous to the sabbatical rest or millennial sabbath. In other words, if you add to the year of the world 3,480, when the pride of Judah was broken, the seven times, that is, 2,520 years, you will find that it will make exactly 6,000 years. Well, if this be so, the affliction of the Jews will cease about the end of 1867, the Jews will be restored, the Gentile oppression will come to an end; Jerusalem will be no longer trodden under foot but repossessed. Christ will appear to his ancient people, and manifest himself in that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. I may be wrong in this estimate of the commencement of the date: it rests with you to judge. I give data. I refuse to decide.

Now let me show you, what will again be somewhat confirmatory of this, that Daniel, under another figure, and applicable in another way, refers to the very same period; when he is speaking of Nebuchadnezzar being reduced to the level of the beasts of the earth. If that account were literal, personal, and applicable only to him, of course this prophetic view could not, by any possibility, be mixed with it. But you will find certain phrases employed by the sacred writer which indicate that the seven times of Nebuchadnezzar's mania relate to something larger, and cover a vaster area than the limits of the life of that monarch. He says: "Let his heart be changed from man's, and let

a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him;"—the very words of Leviticus, you observe. Primarily, I admit, this relates to the personal madness of the Babylonish king; but as it is connected with a series of symbols—and very remarkable symbols too—which continue during the whole period of the four great monarchies, it is reasonable to infer, from the words employed, that the "seven times," if it has a literal application to the person, has also a larger application to the wide world and to the history of mankind. For instance, it is said: "The height of the tree reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;" "leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass;" words signifying the idea of prolonged duration. Then the colossal image, too, which foretokens the fall of the four great monarchies, the kingdom of gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, is also associated with and mixed up with this remarkable judgment, pronounced upon the Babylonian king. And, therefore, we read that in the days of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever and ever. Now all these expressions indicate that the seven times of Nebuchadnezzar's mania is merely in epitome, or in brief, the setting forth of the seven times during which the kings of the earth are to continue as they now are. The question is, When did the seven times of Daniel begin? You will find, from an expression used by the inspired historian, that they are the same seven times that Moses refers to. The inspired historian merges Zedekiah, who was carried to Babylon, and dates the sufferings of Israel from

Manasseh. Now hear his words: "Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this on Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins," not of Zedekiah, he is a personal and immediate instrument, but "for the sins of Manasseh." Well, then, that brings us again to what we brought out in Leviticus, the date at which the pride of the power of that nation was broken in the days of Manasseh. We begin, therefore, Daniel's commencement of his seven times at A.M. 3480; we add the years before Christ, 652; and then the year 1868 of the Christian economy or dispensation added to that brings it to 6000 years; at the end of which 6000 years, if I am correct, Judah shall be restored, and all kings kiss the Son and become nursing fathers of Christianity. God will remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and bring them back to their own land; and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn as one in bitterness for his first born. Well, so much now for the first great period.

Let me turn to another date, and see if I can cast light upon it, namely, the 2300 days; or, as I have shown you, strictly and properly years. We find that referred to in the 8th chapter of Daniel, at the 14th verse. We read in the 13th verse, "I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot"—he is speaking of the Jewish people. How long shall they be trodden under foot? how long shall there be no sacrifice, no true religion, among that race? His answer is not a period at the end of which the

Jews shall be restored, but a period at the end of which the sanctuary shall be cleansed, or, as it might be translated, shall be justified ; on the exhaustion of which we should expect to see some preparation at least for the restoration of Palestine and Jerusalem ; and for the people—God's ancient people—returning once more to their own land. Now the question is, When did the 2300 years begin ? It was at the period when the two-horned ram put forth his whole strength against the Greek he goat, and was broken. Xerxes was humbled, and the Asiatic Greeks emancipated ; for Daniel is speaking of these empires under their respective dynastic figures ; that is to say, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and the Roman empires. It was about the year B.C. 480—481 that this took place, at least within a year : it may be a year on either side ; but I take what seems to be the probable date, much more or much less it cannot possibly be. Assuming it was 481, add 2300 years to 481 years B.C., and the years that have elapsed since, and you come down to the year 1821. If so, do we find anything occurring in the eastern kingdom that would at all justify the inference that the sanctuary began then to be cleansed ? The question we must first ask here is, What now pollutes the sanctuary ? Who is it that possesses Palestine ? What is the great dominant power that triumphs in the east, and prevents the possibility of the restoration of the Jews ? Take this in connection with the sixth vial, where we are told that the sixth vial was poured out upon the great river Euphrates, which is the symbol of the Turkish power, that started on its conquering march into Europe from the banks of the Euphrates ; and "the waters thereof came to be dried up ;" that is,

the Turco-Moslem power began to recede, like a flood that had overflowed Palestine and eastern Europe: in order that the way for kings, or royal ones, from the sun-rising, might be prepared. These kings from the sun-rising are God's ancient people, his kings and his priests ceremonially, as Christians are spiritually. Connect these two predictions, and the inference seems to me fair, that about 1821 we should expect to see receding the Euphratean flood, and the sanctuary which has lain under that great flood of superstition beginning to emerge, and to make ready for the restoration of God's ancient people. Has anything, then, taken place to justify this interpretation? In 1821, I think, or the end of 1820, the Greek Insurrection took place; and the whole of that ancient realm broke loose from the dominion of the Sultan. After that, you find in 1827 the battle of Navarino. From 1821 to the present year we find Bosnia, Wallachia, Moldavia, Algiers, all in succession, like great land slips, falling off from the dominion of the Sultan. We find the very peculiarities of Mahometanism ceasing daily, even the dress of the ladies becoming European; the Sultan conforming to European habits; the Janissaries, the peculiar soldiers of the Turks, long ago utterly annihilated; English banks, English capital, English newspapers, English railroads, English tastes, and steam-ships penetrating the realms of the Sultan. We find that in 1854 our country most justly resolved to support Turkey; not that we loved Mahometanism, but because Turkey was a wall—I admit a very frail one—between us, the Mediterranean, and our eastern empire, and that gigantic autocrat, whose shadow spreads over China; whose influence, I have

often thought, will be traced yet in India and in Persia, and in our troubles there; whose destiny, if I understand prophecy, is yet a terrible one. Our well-meant attempt in 1854 and 1855 to prevent Turkey being destroyed, or to use the apocalyptic language, to prevent the Euphratean flood from being evaporated, was not successful. We have simply hastened the decay of Turkey. The Sultan's power, the Crescent, and his dominion, are at the present moment much nearer exhaustion than at any former period of its history: so much so that Lamartine says: "The Ottoman empire is no empire now at all; its breath of life, religious fanaticism, is extinct; and Turkey," to use his memorable saying, "is literally perishing from want of Turks."

We take the 2300 years as expiring about 1821. Accordingly, we find that the Crescent, which dominates over the East, under which Palestine is at this moment a suffering province, began steadily to wane and to relax its grasp. There are more Jews returned to Jerusalem to-day than there have been for 1800 years; more Jews have been converted in New York and Philadelphia by that pentecostal revival, which I believe to be the work of the Spirit of God, and which is preparing God's people for their grand destiny, and for those events that are coming on the earth, in 1859 and 1860, than for many hundred years before. Enlightened Jews distinctly say that if the Messiah do not come speedily, they will give up the hope altogether; that they believe the time is arrived when He ought to come: and that if He do not come, they will give up all expectation of the Messiah. It has been stated that very lately, for the first time, the fountains

of Palestine have begun to overflow with sweet spring water ; for the first time the early and the latter rains have returned ; for the first time, colonies of Jews are settled in Palestine, cultivating its lands, and sending home reports of their progress in doing so. All this, and still passing scenes, seem to me excessively like the receding of the Euphratean flood from Syria, or the waning of the Mahometan Crescent. The instant that Turkey falls—for Constantinople is to Palestine and to the Mahometan empire what Rome is to the Roman Catholic apostate empires—Jerusalem becomes free. It is impossible Mahometan Turkey can last much longer. Under the Sultan are nine millions of professing Christians, and scarcely three millions of Mahometans, in Turkey in Europe. We find also from the daily correspondence of the papers, that the old Mahometans are crossing the Bosphorus in crowds, in order to find a carpet to pray on, and a grave to lie down in Asia, from whence they came. A daily paper, giving an account of this, says: "The Turks are encamped in Europe"—which is exactly the idea—"and they are rapidly decamping, and returning to their own place again." The instant that the power of the Sultan is broken, Palestine comes up. And what is the cry of the day ? "Italy for the Italians !" and it is a just cry. And the next cry may be heard this very year, Judea for the Jews, and it is a just demand. The Jews have an indefeasible right to it by a charter ancient as the days of Moses, by title-deeds, in comparison of which the title-deeds of England's proudest nobility are only of yesterday—they are the people whose land it was, and whose land it is still, and to whom it is promised : "I will gather you out of all nations, and will bring

you into your own land ; and ye shall be to me a people, and I will be to you a God."

I think I have made out at least a strong case in favour of the interpretation that the 2300 years relate to the cleansing of Palestine, to the decadence of its dominant power, and to the emergence of that ancient land, once more to be the heritage of its ancient people.

I will state one more illustration of dates as confirmatory of the principle of interpretation I have laid down. It is fulfilled, and about its meaning there can be no possible dispute or question. It is Daniel's 70 weeks. Assuming that the week is 7 prophetic days, 70 prophetic weeks would be 70 times 7, or 490 literal years. Daniel first of all speaks of 7 weeks, that is, 49 years ; during which certain events are to take place. Then he says there shall be additional to that 62 weeks, making 483 years ; and then the other one week that remains, or 7 years, making 490 years. He divides it into three periods : first 7 weeks, or 49 years ; then 62 weeks, or 434 years ; then an additional week, or 7 years, making a total of 490 years. When did these begin ? Daniel says, in the middle of the last week shall the Messiah be cut off, and God's kingdom begin in this world, never more to cease. We read in the 9th chapter of Daniel, at the 24th verse, "Seventy weeks"—that is, 490 years—"are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," we have therefore the date of their

commencement, "unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." When did this period begin? It began at the command to rebuild the temple, which was in the year of the world 3679, and must therefore end in the year of the world 4162. But mark, this prophecy relates not to the birth of Christ, but to his manifestation and death. He was baptized, and attested to be the Son of God, and anointed as the Holy One, when a voice from heaven came at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him;" and the Spirit like a dove settled upon Him; and Jesus then, we are told, was thirty years of age. Deduct, therefore, from the year 4162, when Daniel's 490 years, or 70 weeks, expired, 30, which was Christ's age, and you find that the date of Christ's birth must have been, A.M. 4132, at which A.D. began; "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off; and He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week"—in the midst of that last week of seven years—"he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Add now the 7 years to 4162, the close of the 483, and it brings you down to the year of the world 4169, or 37 years after the birth of Christ; that is, 7 years after his baptism. We assume that his baptism, or manifestation, was the anointing, or setting forth, or proclamation of Christ. Then one week more He was to confirm the covenant; in the midst of that week He was to be cut off; and accordingly we find that in the very midst of that

week, namely, at the last of the four passovers in April, at full moon, on a Friday, the death of the Messiah occurred ; that is, at the end of three and a half years of the seven. During the whole week, in the midst of which He was cut off, He confirmed the covenant himself with the Jews ; preaching to Abraham's children ; telling them He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. From the day of his baptism to the day of his death, *i.e.* three and a half years, He opened the door of the Gospel to the Jews ; and then after his death to the day that Cornelius, the first of the Gentiles, was converted, and the Gentiles were admitted to the covenant, was three and a half years more, making it precisely 490 years to the conversion of Cornelius ; the first door opened to the Jews, the second door was opened to the Gentiles. And hence if we date from creation to the beginning of the 70 weeks, 3,679 years (the 70 weeks make 490 years) ; add to this, from the birth of Christ, 37 years—included, you observe, in Daniel's 490 years—add 1823, and you come down to the year 1860 ; add 8 years more, and that would make 6,000 years ; these constituting the great working week of the world, previous to the dawn of the everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God ; that is, on the hypothesis that these calculations are correct.

To my mind it seems satisfactory ; and probably true. At the same time I must repeat, when I preach and speak on doctrinal truths, I do not say this is probably true ; that Christ is God ; that there is but one name by which we can be saved ; that there is but one only atonement, that there is but one cleansing fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness ; that there is but one power that can change man's heart, the Spirit of God ; that there

is a judgment-seat; that there is a heaven; that the whole of mankind shall be divided into two great masses, the sheep and the goats, the people of Christ and they that are not;—on these topics I speak with no reserve or hesitation; I assert they are absolutely, demonstrably true. “He that believeth not shall be lost; he that believeth shall never see death.” But on these dates—I repeat it again, because I have been misconstrued and misinterpreted—I speak with hesitation and reserve. I give data. My conclusions are highly probable, I dare not say inspired. I venture, not to prophesy; nor to assert that these dates I have absolutely, and perfectly, and beyond doubt solved. I have placed them before you—here is my solution; if you are not convinced, reject it; if you are, accept it; and at all events, whether you believe these dates or not, all things seem to indicate that the Saturday afternoon of the world’s long week is come; that the first rays of approaching day begin to tint the mountain tops; and that if ever there was a period when, “Prepare, O Israel, to meet thy God,” was a duty, or when the first sounds of the approaching Bridegroom were heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,” it is now, not in my judgment only, but in the judgment of most wise, learned, and pious men, who at least have not disobeyed the Saviour’s word, that if we be judges of the weather, and say, To-day it will be fine, to-morrow it will not be so, we ought much more to read, and mark, and soberly, cautiously, and prayerfully, without dogmatism, interpret the signs of the stirring age in which it is our lot to live.

LECTURE XII.

PROPHETIC DATES AND THEIR SOLUTION.

WE revert to the investigation of the remaining dates in prophecy. If I prove nothing else, I at least prove this, that there is a wondrous harmony pervading and linking them all.

It is a gratifying fact, that wherever I have stated these things—and I have taken the opportunity in various ways of doing so—secular men, men who have no great sympathy with evangelical and vital truth, have turned their attention to the subject, and have expressed themselves, at least, struck with the consistency of the solution, and the high probability that the solution I have offered may be right.

We read in Daniel vii. that there is to spring up what is called a “little horn”—that is, a power, a dominating, reigning power—that “shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time.” At the end of this portrait it says: “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end.”

This horn, or power, with the mouth speaking great words against the most High, wearing out God’s people

by persecutions of all sorts, that thinks to change times and laws, is literally and exactly the picture of the Papacy, or the great Western Apostasy of Rome. The prediction is, that it is to endure dominant, powerful, crushing, for a "time, times, and half a time;" that at the end of that period it is not to be struck down at once, but "the judgment shall sit;" its dominion—that is, its dominant ascendancy and power—shall be taken away, and it shall be consumed gradually till the end. Now this falls in exactly with what St. Paul tells us, of the same apostasy, in Second Thessalonians, "That wicked one, whom the Lord shall consume," the very words of Daniel, "with the spirit of his mouth," is now wasting away.

The latest proposal of the supposed-to-be imperial author of "The Pope and the Congress" is, that the Pope, instead of a kingdom, shall be assigned a house and a garden; in fact, a manse and glebe, as clergymen have in Scotland. What a tremendous consumption is this, in the condition of him whom kings and monarchs quailed before, if he did but frown, or utter a word of displeasure! This period, of time, times, half a time, is proved to be what I have constantly adduced as the solution of it; a time, 360 years; times, twice 360 years; and half a time, the half of 360 years—making exactly 1260 years. I should not be so sure of this solution did I not find the same chronological period expressed in different terms. For instance, in Revelation xi. 2, "The holy city"—meaning thereby the new Jerusalem, the people of God, the bride—"shall they tread under foot forty-and-two months." Take the month for 30 prophetic days, multiply 42 by 30, and you have 1260 prophetic days or literal years. Then,

in Revelation xi. 3, we read : " I will give power unto my two witnesses," the eastern line, or the Paulinians, and the western line, or the Waldenses ; and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days—that is, the period of 1260 prophetic days, or literal years—" clothed in sackcloth ;" *i. e.* persecuted by this power which Daniel speaks of, having the mouth speaking great things. God's church is represented by the two witnesses, in sackcloth ; that is, persecuted and depressed. We find the same period in Revelation xii. 6, where " the woman"—that is, the church of Christ—" fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." In the Apocalypse, there are two women constantly referred to ; one called *ἡ βασίλισσα*, the woman throned on the beast, clad in scarlet, and splendour, and pomp, and drunk with the blood of the saints ; her glory material, her greatness visible in her crimes ; and the correlative of her, *ἡ ὀπίσθη*, the woman that flees into the wilderness, represented as oppressed, as lowly, as humbled ; with no outward glare and splendour, but with a moral and an inner beauty that God recognizes, though men do not perceive it. In Revelation xiii. 5, it is said : " There was given unto the beast a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies ; and power was given unto him to continue forty-and-two months." Now take Daniel's little horn, with the mouth speaking great words against the Most High, who was to endure time, times, half a time, and compare with it the apocalyptic wild beast, who was to speak great things against the Most High, and to endure 1260 days, or 1260 literal years ; and we have the evidence of a great apostasy that was to

last in a dominant state 1260 years ; at the end of which it was to be, as Daniel calls it, consumed, and the judgment to sit on it, but not to be destroyed till a period long subsequent to that, the period of the second advent. These great periods, then, all resolve themselves into this grand date, 1260 years. The real question for us now to settle is, when was the terminus *a quo*, or the starting period, of the 1260 years ? At once I admit there are two distinct opinions upon that subject ; but of course you must be guided by evidence and your own judgment. I have my own conviction and preference—decided preference ; but in such matters I may be wrong, and those who think differently may be right. One period assigned as the terminus *a quo* is, the year when Phocas gave the Pope—unquestionably gave, or as we think who differ from this view, continued to give the Pope—supreme domination ; and that period would date at the autumnal equinox of 607. Then the Emperor gave the then reigning Bishop of Rome supreme power and autocratic domination. If you add 1260 years to 607, it would bring you down to the year 1867. According to this view, therefore, in 1867 Popery will be extinguished from the earth. The authors and upholders of this view understand the 2300 years to begin also at a later period than generally assumed, and to terminate also in 1867. But now, without at all discussing the objections to this view, let us turn to that accepted by most of the eminent writers on prophecy, who are persuaded that the corporate development of this great apostasy began about the year 533. The evidence is this—and it will rest with every reader, as a responsible Christian, exercising the right of private judgment, to decide upon the

truth of the premises, and the inferences which I submit. In the year 533—about the beginning of it, therefore I might say almost 532—the Emperor Justinian, then reigning, addressed a letter to John the Second, the Bishop of Rome. In his letter, Justinian thus speaks; “We have hastened to bring into subjection, and to unite to the See of your Holiness, all the priests of the whole Eastern Church,—your Holiness the head of all the holy church.” When the Emperor thus addressed the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, if he repudiated these rules, the Bishop was so far blameless; but if the Bishop accepted the awful position of head of the church, and became, and set himself forth, and assumed to be the autocratic priest that claimed to govern all churches, then, I contend that the Emperor gave what the Pope accepted, that supremacy which became the corporate apostasy. Many people do not understand what Antichrist is. Antichrist does not mean one opposed to Christ, but it means one that takes the place of Christ. *Ανθυπατος* does not mean a person who is against the consul, but, as it is well translated in Latin, proconsul, one who takes the place of the consul. So *Αντιβασιλευς* does not mean a person opposed to the king, but as it is well translated in Latin, a *pro-rex*, one that takes the place of the king. Pope John did not oppose Christ, but when the Emperor gave what he accepted, he put himself in the place of Christ, who alone is the Head of all his redeemed and ransomed church. The Pope replied to the Emperor’s letter in these words: “You preserve the reverence of the Roman see, and are subjecting all things to it, and bringing them into union with it; to whose founder, Peter, the charge was given from our Lord’s lips, ‘Feed my sheep,’ which

see the Rules of the Fathers, and the Statutes of the Princes, and the much to be honoured expressions of your piety, attest truly to be the Head of all the churches. Your edict is conformable to apostolic doctrine; I confirm it with my authority."* Now, here was the supreme civil power constituting, and the ecclesiastical power accepting this brand. These letters were not private; they were laws placed in the Statute Book, and became the governing laws of Rome; and they are at this moment found under the title, "De summa Trinitate," and therefore are laws recognized and accepted. I date the commencement of the 1260 years, that is, the development of that apostasy which was to speak great things against the Most High, to open its mouth in blasphemy, to wear out the saints, A.D. 533. Its principles were in the days of Paul, but its corporate development was in the year 533. Now if this be correct, add 1260 to 533, or, if you like, 532, for it was at the close of 532, and the beginning of 533, and it brings us down to 1792 or 1793. If this be the correct application of the *terminus a quo* we ought to find in 1793 some evidence that the judgment sat, that this great power began to be consumed, and his dominion, or his tyranny, to abate, and the saints of the most High to begin to be delivered; for Daniel says: "They shall then, at the close of the 1260 years, take away his dominion, to consume it, and to destroy it unto the end," which end is not yet come. If you will read the history of the papacy at that time, you will find her priests were massacred, her monasteries and convents plundered, her shrines rifled, her altars

* Roman Catholic commentators accept 533 as the date of the recognition of papal supremacy.

dismantled, and, finally, the Code Napoléon, the most remarkable and splendid code of laws that ever was given, took effect, and produced a change as great as the Novellæ and the edict of Justinian did 1260 years before. Taking these two facts together, we have, I think, a strong presumptive proof that the judgment sat, his dominion began to be taken away; though, in the language of Daniel, his life was prolonged for a season.

We shall find the reduction of the power of Romanism throughout all Europe steadily going on at this day. There is not a nation in Europe in which Romanism is not dying out; the only deplorable exception is England. I am sorry to admit it; but perhaps it arises from the fact that our free air, our free constitution, our noble and often too generous treatment of the ungrateful and unworthy, has led them to this country as to the only place where they can make use of liberty, and turn it into license for the propagation and development of their doctrines. How dreadful must be the state and tendency of things in Ireland, when one of the leading organs of public opinion actually states that all the eloquence was in favour of the Emancipation Act of 1829; that all the bigotry was against it; but that the eloquence seems to have been wrong, and the bigotry seems to have been right! If we turn to the Continent of Europe, you will find that in France, out of thirty-six millions of people (I quote from Roman Catholic authorities), only two millions go to confession. But what is the law of the Church of Rome? That if any member of the Roman Catholic Church omit to go to confession once a year, he is, *ipso facto*, an excommunicated person.

In Paris, in the year 1793, there were 5000 priests. The population of Paris has doubled since that period; there ought, therefore, now to be 10,000 priests; but so entire is the consumption, that the number of priests at this moment is about 830. In a conversation, in the spring of the year 1859, with an Abbé of a cathedral church, he told me, candidly and honestly, that there is no religion in Paris at all; that the people, in his own words, are atheists, and have no religion. Hungary begins to assert its rights; and Austria, trembling, may not dare to refuse them; Sardinia emerges from the cloud; and the nursing mother of that noble church, the Waldenses, is blessed of God, because she has nursed his church and his people. The Romagna and the States of the Church are all breaking loose from Rome; and the last proposition, meant to be submitted with the whole weight of imperial power before the proposed Congress, was that the Pope shall have the city of Rome for his empire; and with words of satire the most cutting, it is added in the imperial document, that "there he can study religion and admire ruins;" and there are more ruins there, than those of buildings, to weep over rather than to admire. In other words, the Emperor seems willing to make the Pope just like a Scottish parish clergyman, with a respectable manse and a tolerable glebe. What a change from the mouth speaking great things! What a change from him who made the Emperor of Germany do penance amid the snows and in the trenches before he would give him absolution! What a change from him to whom England used to pay Peter pence, in order to stave off his terrible anathemas and decrees! What a change from him who shook the nations! He is now, like Lucifer of old,

become as one of us. Well, then, is it not highly probable that the 1260 years began in 533, seeing that the depicted termination of the 1260 years comes out so clearly in 1793?

Daniel in his last chapter speaks of two additional periods; one of 30 years to be added to the 1260, making 1290; then another period of 45, to be added to the 1290, making 1335. Now take these periods, add 30 years to 1792, you come down to 1822 or 1823; and that period again synchronizes with the exhaustion of the 2300 years to which I have previously referred. Then add 45 years, which Daniel adds to the 1290, and it brings you down to 1867 or the beginning of 1868; at which period, if this interpretation be correct, they that arrive are blessed—for then the sun should rise over a world once wrecked, but now restored—that sun that shall have no western declension.

In order further to show you the bearings of what I have stated, let me add there is an almost universal opinion expressed by ancient Jewish *literati*, by Patristic writers, and by many modern Christian writers, that the six days of creation are typical of 6000 years of the world's working week; that as God took six days to make the earth, he takes 6000 years to work the earth; that as the six days ended with a sabbath, the 6000 years will end with a thousand years' rest or the millennium. This is somewhat confirmed by what St. Paul says: "There remaineth a *σαββατισμος*," that is, "a great sabbath-keeping for the people of God." To show, however, that the opinion is not mine only, I will read one or two extracts additional to others quoted in my previous work which strikingly confirm it. Rabbi Eleazar, quoted by Whitby in his learned

comment, refers to the common opinion of the Jews that the world shall continue 6000 years, and then a perpetual sabbath begin, typified by God's resting on the seventh day, and blessing it. Another Rabbi in the gloss on the Talmud, says: "The world will continue 6000 years." Elias, an ancient Rabbi, says: "There will be 2000 years before Christ; the world will last 6000 years as it now is; 2000 void, 2000 under the law, and 2000 days under the Messiah;" that is, years, or 6000 years. The author of the Cespar Mishna, in his Notes on Maimonides, says: "At the end of the world will be the day of judgment, the resurrection of the dead; and after that the world to come, of which we often read in the New Testament. These things are intimated to us by the six days' work; on the sixth day Adam was created, and perfected on the seventh. This is the beginning of the world to come, and the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee are the same thing." I turn to Christian writers. Barnabas, the earliest of the Fathers, in the first century, thus writes: "The Lord God will finish all things in 6000 years; in six days, *id est*, 6000 years, shall all things be consummated." Lactantius, the most eloquent and classic of the Fathers, whose Latin is distinguished for classic purity and idiom, says: "Because the works of God were finished in six days, it is necessary that the world should remain in this state for six ages, that is, 6000 years." Cyprian, the celebrated Bishop of Carthage, says: "In the creation of the world seven days were spent; and in those seven days 7000 years were figuratively typified." And Bishop Latimer, the great Reformer, says: "The world was ordained of God to continue, as Scripture and all learned men agree, 6000

+ He had seen St John's
 temple with him.

years." Now these testimonies, to which many others might be added, are at least remarkable for their extent and unanimity; when we connect with this the constant use of the number *seven*, as, for instance, six days' creation, culminating in a seventh, the sabbath; seven weeks, or seven times seven, the year of jubilee; the seven lamps, the seven candlesticks, the seven stars, the seven angels, the seven seals; seven being the symbol, the numerical symbol of perfection. Confirmatory of this we read that Adam was a figure of Christ; and there we have the key to this interpretation; and so far an evidence that it is not a fancy, but a very solid and just interpretation of Scripture; and lastly we have a hint of it in the passage; "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years;" which also has been adduced.

Supposing, now, that Daniel's great period should end in 1867, or the beginning of 1868, you naturally say, But the world has not nearly exhausted its 6000 years, because in 1860 it is nearly 140 years to the close of the 6000. But it has been ascertained since the author of the common A.D., and Usher, and other chronologists wrote, that there was a great mistake made in the computation of the patriarchal periods; and that our Christian era, that is, our 1860 years, began not when the world was 4004 years old, as is said in our Bibles, but when the world was 4132 years old, when Jesus was born.

The learned Clinton gives 4138, as the time when our Christian era began, and 4132 as the year of the birth of Christ. According to this, the 6000 years end about the year 1862, that is, two years hence. Our Lord's birth took place a year before Herod began

his reign ; that is, five years before Clinton's date of the Christian era. But Shimeall of New York, in his recent elaborate work on the "Chronology of Scripture," and the Rev. B. Saville, in his valuable compilation called "The First and Second Advent," have shown that the date of the Christian era, or A.D., and the true year of the birth of Christ synchronize in anno mundi 4132. If so, the 6000 years run out in 1867. —

If these calculations are just, we are on the margin of great events. But it rests with you to attach to these explanations what weight or force you please. When I speak the truths of the Gospel, there is no question, and I have no hesitation, and I put no *if*; but when I try to explain unfulfilled prophecy, you must always understand me to admit I may be wrong. I have a strong impression that I am right; you have had the data submitted to you; you, as responsible and rational men, can weigh, and study, and come to the conclusion you think best.

Let me show you, however, by two or three more instances, that the method of solution is sustained by other references. We read, for instance, in the 9th chapter of Revelation, at the 5th verse, that "to them"—that is, the Saracenic power—"it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months." Mahomet was raised up to punish the all but universal idolatry of Christendom; and whatever be the degree of awful imposition in the Koran, it certainly tolerates no idolatry. The reason why the Moslem is not now a Christian is very much because he has never seen Christianity in its purity. He sees the Greek Church, a mere copy of the Romish, filled with idolatrous pictures. Recently, on seeing for

the first time an American Presbyterian church in Constantinople, the Moslem made the remark, "These people are not Christians, they are Protestants;" naturally concluding that Protestants were quite a different race of religionists from the people called Christians. The Church of England, with great good sense, which I wish some would transfer to the east of London, has resolved that in building the new English church in Constantinople there shall not be a picture of anything in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the water under the earth; in short, that it shall be pure and simple as a Scottish parish church. This, by God's blessing, may help to teach the Moslem that Christianity is not the idolatrous pageant of the west, or the painted mummerly of the east; but that simple, and therefore sublime ritual whose worship is in spirit and in truth. It is predicted that Christendom was to be tormented by this Saracenic eruption "five months." Let us see how exactly this corresponds to fact. In 612 Mahomet announced his mission. He asked, "Who will be my vizier?" The answer of Ali was, "I will be your vizier. Whosoever rises up against thee, I will take out his teeth, tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip him up;" language exactly descriptive of Mahometanism. Now here was the starting crusade of him whom Daniel calls "the king of fierce countenance." And we read in Hallam, the historian, that the command given to the Mahometans was to desolate the world; in the words of the Apocalypse, to torment Christendom for five months. The period when this power started was 612; the power when it ceased its action, and was rent in twain, and settled finally on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, was the year 762.

Subtract 612 from 762, and you have 150 years, or 5 times 30 prophetic days; that is, 5 times 30 literal years, or 150 years. There is a fact from the past confirmatory of our explanations. Let us now turn to another case. We read in the same 9th chapter of Revelation, at the 14th verse, that "a voice said to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men." Now these four angels loosed from the Euphrates are the representatives of the nationality that had previously settled and was then dwelling on its banks. In the days of Isaiah the Euphrates stood for Assyria, which was in the prophet's time the nationality on its banks; in the days of this apocalyptic prophecy they were the Turco-Moslem, who then rested on the Euphrates. The Turco-Moslem forces started from Bagdad on the Euphrates, as soon as the restraining angels were let loose, and poured upon Christendom, A.D. 1057, under the lead of Togrul Beg, and Alp Arslan; inflicting fearful judgments upon the whole of eastern Christendom; and finally, under Hinnor, they reduced and took possession of Constantinople, in the year 1453. Now the year they started was 1057; the period they settled down, after the ruining and dismantling of the beautiful Queen of the East, Constantinople, was 1453; that is, a period of 396 years. Now assuming a day to mean a year, and of course an hour the 24th part of a day, or the 24th part of a strict year, you have an hour, 15 days; *plus* a year; *plus* 30 years; *plus* 365 and a quarter years; exactly 396 years. So that wherever we apply this

mode of calculation to prophecies that have already passed into history, we find it in every instance proximately exact. If I were to add all this up, now, I would say, the beginning of the 2300 years was A.M. 3651; add to that the year B.C. 481; add to that A.D. 1821, when the Crescent began to wane; then suppose 39 years from that period for the drying up of the Euphrates to the present day, then add 8 years; and you make up exactly 6000 years, the supposed end of the world's working week, and the dawn, if this be correct, of the first year of the millennial rest.

Let us take another confirmatory instance. The two witnesses were the representatives of the two lines of testifying Protestants throughout the middle ages, east and west. It is said they were to be killed, which, of course, is symbolical, and therefore denotes the cessation of their testimony; they were to lie dead $3\frac{1}{2}$ prophetic days, that is, $3\frac{1}{2}$ literal years; they were to rise again, or resume their testimony afresh. On May 5th, 1514, in the 9th Session of the Lateran, the public orator, after summoning the Bohemian and other heretics to answer for themselves, and getting no response, proclaimed from the pulpit and the assembled archbishops and bishops, "There is no answer; no one opposes." Here was the evidence of the death or extinction of the testimony of the witnesses. It is predicted that they should send presents one to another by way of congratulation, because the witnesses were dead. History informs us that splendid presents were sent to the Pope by the King of Portugal and others, congratulating him upon the extinction of all heresy, apocalyptically "the death of the witnesses." They lay dead or unburied—that is, the canonical treatment of heretics by

the Roman Catholic Church—3½ years. On October 31st, 1517, Martin Luther sprang to his feet, posted his *thesis*—that is, his grand protest against Popery, and in defence of evangelical truth—upon the gates of Wittenburgh Cathedral. Now from May 5th, 1514, the day of their death, to October 31st, 1517, exactly the day of their resurrection, three years and a half intervened. Here, again, we have the fulfilment of the prophecy and another proof of the year-day system.

One other instance I will here refer to: in Revelation xiii. 18, where, in describing "the beast," as it is called, or properly, the wild beast, the symbol of the Papal power—for that is the real power that is set forth—it says at the close of the chapter, "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six;" 666. The Greeks had no numerals as we have; our numerals, as you are aware, 1, 2, 3, are Arabic; but the Greeks and Romans made the letters of their alphabet the representatives of numbers; in fact, when we have Roman numbering we still put a v for 5, an x for 10, i before the x is one before 10, that is, 9. One word contains exactly the number of the man. The first person who suggested a solution was the ancient Father Irenæus, one of the most excellent of all the fathers. He said that the name of the man was *Ααρων*.

Add up the letters—

Α	α	ρ	σ	ι	ν	ο	ς
30	+ 1	+ 300	+ 5	+ 10	+ 50	+ 70	+ 200 = 666.

By adding up the letters in their representative character as numerals, they exactly number 666. To show that this is not an unmeaning and arbitrary word,

the Church of Rome has Latin service, the Latin throne, Latin decretals, Latin canons, Latin bulls, Latin creed. I add a remarkable extract from Macaulay, very much confirmatory of this. He says, without the least reference to prophecy: "The Reformation was a national as well as moral revolt. It is a most significant circumstance that no large city of which the tongue is not Teutonic has ever turned Protestant; and that wherever we find a language derived from that of ancient Rome—the Latin tongue—there we find the religion of modern Rome to this day prevails," so far showing the justness of the interpretation of the ancient father.

I have given you the elements of a conclusion; it is for you to conclude. If I should be wrong in my preference, those who take the other opinion, that the great apostasy began in 607, equally point out 1867 as a great determinating crisis. If 1867 shall pass away in quiet to its grave, and if I should be spared to the close of that year, or if others should, who have read what I have written, I shall not deserve to be called a false prophet, because I have never attempted to prophesy. You will be able then to judge, if you are spared, as many of you will be, whether these interpretations and solutions apparently probable be correct or not. If they be correct inferences from solid premises, then we are near the times of the restitution of all things; then we may expect what Daniel and the Gospels predict: "In those days shall be affliction such as never was from the beginning of the creation of God;" then shall be wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, people against people." Who can even at this moment look round him without seeing the dim shadows projected on the present,

of events foreboding and looming in the future? Look at our own country, most justly arming at every point; look at the proposals we have heard for ten millions to be laid out in doing what is instant duty, adding to the strength of our navy, and the force of our army; as if there were preparations for a storm through the like of which England never passed before. It is quite right that we should be dependent not upon any man's good intentions, however great or however tried. It is worthy of our antecedents that we should stand upon our own ground. I have the completest conviction that our country will pass chastened yet victorious through it all: we have too many proofs of the blessing of God upon the past, ever to doubt that we have still the elements of a people that God has blessed. England occupies in Christendom the position which ancient Judea occupied of old; it is God's grand protesting witness to the nations of the earth; and whatever chastisements we may be fated to pass through, whatever tribulations we are doomed to endure, old England, I believe, will weather all.

The duties of the day are ours; the trust of eternity is ours also—the bright hope shines before us like a star, cheering and steady; and while England expects every man to do his duty, a greater than England, the great Captain of the faith, expects us to have our loins girt, our lamps burning, our shoes upon our feet, our hearts and our treasure in heaven; and to them that thus look for Him, He will come the second time without sin unto salvation.*

* I have profited much in these chronological investigations by the study of Mr. Shimeall's very able and elaborate work, to which the reader is referred.

LECTURE XIII.

FEAR NOT, YOUR GOD WILL COME.

We need encouragement as well as warning. The advent, like the Pillar in the Desert, has one aspect to Christians and another to the world.

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not ; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense ; he will come and save you.”—ISAIAH XXXV. 4.

THESE words are interpolated in that magnificent strain which predicts the glory of the future. They form a prescription, practical and personal, in the bosom of a prophecy more than ordinarily magnificent. As if the prophet felt that the splendour of the scene delineated in the chapter was too dazzling, he interrupts the strain, and throws in the homely, the personal, and practical prescription, “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not ;” God your Saviour will come in righteous judgment upon all that despise Him, but with salvation and healing under his wings to all that look for Him at that day. The predictions of the previous chapter, the 34th, are meant to stir the world, and to waken up the drowsy sleepers among mankind ; the grand prophecy in the 35th chapter is meant to cheer and animate the drooping heart of a persecuted, but a

patient and expectant church, that will not let go her hope of deliverance and of glory yet to be revealed. "Fear not." What has a Christian to fear? The apostle Paul enumerates what we need not fear, what we in our weakness fear; but against which the prescription of the prophet fully and clearly guards us. We have a catalogue of the things which Christians sometimes in their weakness fear, but which the apostle tells them they need not fear, in the 8th of Romans. He tells us of tribulation, of distress, of persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height and depth; but in the rush of all these, Fear not; "for I am persuaded," says the inspired and magnificent orator, "that none of these shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Therefore, "Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not."

Let me look at one or two of the things we are prone to fear in the dark catalogue of the apostle. Do you fear death? We are told that there are many who are all their lifetime kept in bondage through the fear of death. At once I admit that death is an unnatural thing; we were never made nor meant to die. Nothing can account for that violent interruption of the continuity of a life whose every pulse should be praise, and whose every look should be sunshine, except the introduction of sin; yet death we have no cause, if we be Christians, to fear. In order to have a right apprehension of death, we must detach from it the grave. What we popularly mean by death is the grave, corruption, decay: in the language of the patriarch, sitting mourning and weeping on those eastern plains, we

understand by it "the worm our sister, and corruption our mother." But what is death detached from the grave? The lifting of the anchor, that the immortal ship may set sail; the snapping of the cords that moor it to the shores of this life, that we may enter on that ocean that has no storms, and in which shipwreck is for ever impossible. Death, therefore, a Christian need not fear. Should any of you fear it, remember who has said, "O death, I will be thy destruction;" remember who teaches us to sing, "O grave, where is thy victory?" The portrait is grand, the victory is glorious: it represents a Christian standing upon an elevated height, on some lofty rock, high above the tide mark, seeing death dashing against the rock, in order to suck him into its depths, and looking down upon the cold waves as you look down upon wild beasts that seek to tear you in pieces, where you are safe beyond their reach, and shouting in defiant and sarcastic accents—for there is a sarcasm that is sacred—"O death, where now is thy sting? O grave, where now is thy victory?" You cannot touch me: there is separation between you and me, which you can no more cross than you can leap from the grave into the bosom of heaven itself. Death at present comes to all. There will be some at the last day who will never die; but at present the body goes the way of all flesh, and the soul the way of all spirits. Sometimes it comes to us in the shape of lingering disease: sometimes the spring of life, like the mainspring of a watch, snaps at once; at other times it gradually uncoils, and we reach a protracted age. The experience of nearly 6000 years has been, that it is appointed unto men to die. If you be not a Christian, then of all things death is the most terrible; but if you

be a Christian, death has no power to hurt you : it has only a commission to give you your *Nunc Dimittis*, to bid you come from being an out-door servant in the storms, and winds, and rains, and cold, and snow, to be an in-door servant in that sunshine and in those magnificent mansions which God has prepared for them that love Him. Therefore, a Christian, death merely takes into closer intimacy with his Lord ; it merely wafts him across the sea into the presence of God and of the Lamb. The funeral bell that tolls a Christian's death to his ear is the joyous peal of bells that welcome him to the marriage feast of the Lamb. And, therefore, let a Christian now learn to feel, that nowhere, in no shape, at no time, can death hurt him ; it has been consecrated to go forth at Christ's bidding, and to lay its finger upon the heart, as the minstrel lays his hand upon the harp-strings ; not to destroy them, but simply to deaden their vibrations. Death shall not separate us from Christ : therefore I say to every Christian who is of a fearful heart, "Be strong, fear not ;" death cannot separate you from Christ.

Let me take another item in the apostle's dark catalogue—"Nor life." Life is a thing which Christians often fear may separate them from Christ. But what does He tell us ? "Neither death nor life" shall do it. It is a solemn thing, people say, to die ; but it is a vastly more solemn thing to live. It is easier to die a martyr than to live a Christian. Man's nerve can inspire him to do one grand, heroic deed ; but it requires wonderful grace to enable him to go on patiently and persistently, fulfilling the small duties, and bearing meekly the petty trials of social, domestic, national, and individual life. Courage is far more easy than patience :

thousands have courage to dare who have not patience to endure. Man has most courage, woman has most patience; hers is, therefore, the sublimer feature. But the Christian has need of both, courage to dare, patience to endure; and grace can inspire both. Ignorant of the responsibilities of life, we are sometimes tempted or prompted to fear it. What a strange mystery is the barest life! Poverty, long pursuing, comes up with one; sickness, long lying in wait, at last fastens upon another; complications we cannot unravel place us in perplexity and pain, and almost plunge us in despair. We know not what shall be on the morrow; we cannot predict the incidents, or what the world calls the accidents, of a single hour. Ups and downs, shadows and sunshine, tears and smiles, bridals and burials, these make up the tangled web of life; and many a one in this hot age longs to lay his head upon the last pillow, and to shuffle off this coil of mortal life, which has become to him a burden, instead of a blessing. But life, with all its ups and downs, with all its trials, and griefs, and gladness, never can separate the humblest Christian upon earth from union to Christ, or Christ's love to him. Therefore I say unto every one who is of a fearful heart, Be strong; neither death nor life can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The apostle includes in his catalogue another class, angels. If these be good angels, they would never think of injuring us; their presence, therefore, we have no right nor reason to fear. What are they? They gathered in shining groups around the sublime Sufferer on Calvary; they came in grand procession to a grave in the garden of Arimathea; they proclaimed the glad

tidings of great joy from the starry heights of heaven to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem; and they are now, in the case of every Christian upon earth, ministering spirits, to them and to all the heirs of salvation. Good angels, therefore, cannot hurt us; you need not fear them. But do you fear fallen angels? I admit it is a very solemn and a very awful thought, that in the sanctuary itself may be troops of unseen fallen fiends, trying to anticipate or thwart the holy angel that ministers to each believer. It is a very awful thought, that these fallen spirits can find access to the human mind, and plant there a doubt; or to the human heart, and deposit there the germ of an evil and unhallowed passion. If in this world heaven left us alone, we should be the helpless victims, and fallen spirits would be the dominant tyrants and despots on the face of the whole earth. But we read they are crushed and restrained; they are kept in chains until the judgment of the last day. There is a very beautiful text, which is very comforting, yielding grounds on which you may not fear. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired"—Christ saw Satan's wish long before Satan carried it into action—"Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee like wheat; but"—mark the anticipatory interposition, Christ's intercession preceding Satan's action—"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Here is the safety of a believer; not that the fallen spirit will be inactive, not that the fallen fiend is not to be deprecated, but if in one mightier than all, yours is a protection that no hostile force can penetrate, and a safety that will enable you to say, Not even angels, fallen angels, shall be able to separate me from God's love; therefore my fearful heart will be strong, and fear not.

The apostle includes another in this list : "Principalities," which, he says, Christians often may fear. What are principalities? These are secular and earthly powers. Principalities, in the days of the apostles, were personated in Nero or Domitian. Principalities clothed Christians in combustible robes, covered with pitch and tar ; and Nero played his violin at his palace window, while the Christians were burnt to ashes by this horrible and ingenious torture, lighting up with the flames that consumed them the darkness of the Roman capital. And principalities have acted against Christ's people since that time—a Hildebrand, a Gregory IX., a Dominic, and other Papal persecutors of the saints have tormented God's people. But the hottest fires that ever consumed a martyr have only carried him most speedily to heaven ; the very flames that surrounded the Christian cast their splendour on the iniquity of the system that sentenced him, and upon the glory of the principles he sealed by his death ; and the very ashes of the Christians, like those of Wickliffe at Lutterworth, when dug up from the grave by his persecutors, and cast into the Avon, the Avon bore them to the ocean, and they were scattered wide as the sea's wild waves, typifying the principles which he attested, and destined to share in a supremacy extending from the river even to the ends of the earth. It is a grand thought, that no force on earth can permanently set up a lie ; and that the combined energies of the world never can pull down God's truth. As an American poet says :—

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers ;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies amid her worshippers."

Principalities cannot separate you from Christ. We say, therefore, to any fearful heart, "Be strong, fear not."

Shall I add another from this grim catalogue? "Powers," says the apostle, the people of God may, but need not fear. These are physical or material powers; lightning, tempest, plague,*battle, earthquake. We read in the prediction of the last times that these shall be multiplied and intensified to the very highest possible degree. But can they injure us? The lightning may rend the gnarled oak; the earthquake may engulf the most splendid capital upon earth; the hurricane may scatter the noblest dynasties like driftwood upon the waves of the desert ocean; but neither lightning, nor tempest, nor storm, can injure the redeemed soul of the humblest saint. All the winds of heaven may beat upon the least living branch of the living vine, but all their combined force cannot wrench that branch off.

These are "things present." What are the "things present" that most try and trouble you at this moment? A thousand cares creep with cold shadows over the human heart. There is not one of us that at times is not downcast, not always because of outer things, but frequently because of inner feelings, and often we know not why, or how, or wherefore. Things present there are amid which some are bearing up, but almost overcome; things present, with which many are struggling and fighting, knowing not which shall have the victory. Things present—take the darkest, the heaviest, the worst, the most intolerable of them all—anything that is present in your mind at this moment, and let every one look for once into his heart, and try to ascertain what is the thing that troubles him most; that

thing never can destroy you, never can detach you from Christ, no more can it conquer you than it can conquer Him ; it may vex, it may irritate, it may tempt you to speak unadvisedly with your lips, but it cannot separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus your Lord.

He adds "things to come." Shall they be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus? What they will be we do not know. The year we have entered on may witness scenes that we no more dream of than the babe that is just born. To some the remainder of this year will come in bridal robes—to others its months will come weeping in funeral weeds—some will become rich, and some will be made indeed poor. What changes, what vicissitudes, are before us, we cannot forecast. Most of us, if we were to express our experience, would confess that all the things that have befallen us in the past are as unlike anything we ever anticipated as can possibly be. We know not, therefore, what things are yet to come : but let the Pyramids descend into the sand into which they are sinking—let cities turn to dust—let the time come when we shall look in vain for London, Paris, Vienna, or Rome ; and let the age arrive when there shall be no more sea, and when all things shall be made new ; whatever be the convulsions, whatever the storms in the midst of which these shall take place, we know the mountains shall depart, the hills be removed ; but my loving-kindness shall not depart, and the covenant of my peace shall never be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee. In language exquisitely touching, "A mother *may* forget"—the impossibility—"a mother *may* forget her infant, that she should not have compassion on it : but

I will never forget thee; I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are ever before me; I will never, no, never leave thee; I will never, no, never forsake thee." Therefore, fearful heart, be strong, and fear not.

There is another phantom in the apostle's catalogue: "Height." Is it social height? Are you placed on the pinnacle of the great pyramid of social life? It is a perilous position. Strange to say, our ambition prompts us to aspire to it; but depend upon it those persons who are nearest the top of social life are least satisfied with their position. The atmosphere there is thinner and rarer; the winds, and rains, and tempests beat heavier there; and it needs very careful feet to prevent one from slipping and falling from the high and slippery levels of social life. "Uneasy," says the poet, "lies the head that wears a crown;" and the uneasiness is slightly mitigated as we descend; until I believe the country peasant who sows his corn, or reaps his harvest, with the toil of his own hand and the sweat of his own brow, sleeps sweeter at night than Queen Victoria, or her responsible ministers that are around her throne. It is a great mistake to imagine that happiness increases as we rise. It is pretty equally dispersed over all society; but if there are any that are least happy, it is those that occupy the loftiest places of social life. But God kept Jesus when Satan carried him to a pinnacle of the temple; and the same God that kept from falling the Great Sacrifice and Saviour will keep your feet from falling, your eyes from tears, your souls from death.

Let me take one more from this catalogue. He says, "Nor depth." If the high paths of life are slippery,

and exposed to peril, and dangerous to tread, covered with clouds, and frequently stricken with storms, the very lowest have their temptations also. It is a mistake to suppose that there is more vice among the lowest classes than among the highest; I fear there is just as much vice of its kind among the highest as among the lowest. The fact is, it is only where God's grace has changed the heart that men live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. But if the highest have their temptations, the lowest have their trials also. "Give me not riches, lest I be proud and forget thee;" there is the temptation of the rich: "Give me not poverty, lest I steal;" there is the temptation of the poor: "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me;" there is the prayer of the Christian. Now, then, if the highest have their temptations and their perils, and their hearts may fear, the humblest have their temptations and their perils also, and their hearts may no less fear. And when one goes into some of the dens of social life, or walks along some of the worst streets in this great capital, and sees the poor needlewoman looking up from the damp, cold cellar, out of whose life some mercenary capitalist is wringing his prosperity and grandeur—and when you look up and see gaunt famine staring down from the cold, empty garret, without a fire, and scarcely with a bed in it; and when you see the children of the poor naked, starved, and hunger-bitten, rarely taught a lesson of love, and believing only in Spartan honesty—that it is honest to steal if you are not caught by the policeman in or after doing so,—when we look at all this one cannot but feel what temptations must be there; nor help thinking that we that are better off ought not

to let these things be so. We know the richest man on earth cannot heal all; but every man may select a patch of the moral desert, and cultivate that patch, and try to make it brighter, if not to blossom as the rose. There is no church, or sanctuary, or home, that has not some spot where each may do good, and consecrate and concentrate his best energies, in a world in which is so much sorrow, sickness, sin, and ignorance. It is an awful thing to die and leave, as I sometimes see in the newspaper, a thousand, a hundred thousand, half a million, or a million of money; I should not like to die so. I should like rather to pass through the world leaving some hearts to retain the memory of my beneficence, or if not of my beneficence, at least of my humble efforts to make them wiser, and happier, and better, and their life's hard pillow softer because I paid an occasional visit to their wretched and their miserable homes. But let all this be, and let worse than this be, it cannot separate a Christian, if a Christian, even in life's deepest depths, from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore be strong, fear not. These things may rise and swell like the waves of the sea, but they cannot overflow the Rock of Ages on which you rest. These things may vex and chafe, but they cannot destroy; nay, they cannot injure; instead of impeding they must give impulse; for what does an apostle tell us? "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." What a glorious thought! They are yours to help you, not to impede you; yours to sanctify you, not to lead you into sin; yours to urge you onward when they seem most

to keep you backward ; “ for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Then, Be strong in faith. Over you is the roof of a firmament through which no fiery dart of the Wicked One can ever come ; yours is ground on which the heart may drop its anchor and be quiet ; and the mind cease its oscillation, and trust, and be still. Yours is a charmed life ; around you are the everlasting arms ; your refuge is the mighty God of Jacob. Be patient ; He will come ; and when He comes He will save you from the last fire, from all sin ; He will save you from sorrow, from toil, and from the touch of death. He will deliver you with an everlasting salvation. “ Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God ; believe also in me.” Here is the true source of comfort. Do not keep stirring the ashes of dead things in your conscience ; do not keep turning over the leaves of memory, debiting the soul with a thousand debts that you can never pay ; do not keep looking within, trying if you can to strike a balance—that after all if you are not so good you are not so bad, and therefore that you have a chance of escape. Leave the whole thing ; it is a bankrupt concern : look out from the ruin, look up to Him who has taken your debts upon his own shoulder, who bears your heaviest burden, and asks you just to consent to be saved in his way, and He will save you with an everlasting salvation. The springs out of which streams of comfort will come to you, oh believer ! are not found in the marshes of this world, nor dug out by you in its cold, bleak rocks ; they are found in the city of our God—they are in the uplands of glory—they are in the crystal fountains of Zion ; they are in the Rock of Ages. “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink ; if any man fear, let him look unto me,

and fear not;" and may the Spirit of God say to you, and to me, and to all of us, whatever may be our bitter trial, "Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not;" for Christ will come and save you with an everlasting salvation.

LECTURE XIV.

PALESTINE RECONSECRATED.

That land of glorious traditions so recently the scene of cruel massacre, has yet a magnificent future in reserve.

"For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wildernesses like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you."—ISAIAH li. 3, 11 and 12.

ONE thread of connection links the words of the prophet into a grand and brilliant prophecy. The 3rd verse predicts the restoration of the land to more than its ancient fertility and beauty; the 11th verse foretells the return of the inhabitants to the land in a state of felicity and joy, intermingled with no sorrow, and broken by no mournings for ever; and in the first line of the 12th verse is announced the author of both the regeneration of the land and the restoration of the people;

"I, even I, am he that comforteth you." Let us direct our attention, first, to the regeneration of the land; secondly, to the restoration of its people; and lastly, to the author of it all, who comforts them, and also comforts us who believe while we suffer.

For a moment let us consider what the land was—what it is—and what it is prophesied it will one day be. Read the ancient inspired portraiture of that rare and beautiful land. It was a land of unprecedented fertility, salubrity, and beauty. Often two harvests were gleaned in one year. The very valley in which the Dead Sea, like the ghastly picture of death, sleeps and festers continually, was once exquisitely beautiful and munificently fertile as Paradise itself. We find Judea spoken of as a good land—a land that flowed with milk and with honey. The flowers were in perennial bloom, instead of being, as in this country, often nipped by the frosts in early spring, and even when they burst into their fullest beauty in our summer, poor and mean in comparison of what the flowers of Palestine were—flowers on some of which Eve looked, and on which Eve's daughters and sons shall look again. The flowers of Judea bloomed in ceaseless beauty, and retained their glory throughout the year. Our experience at present of one part of the year—the offspring of the curse—is dreary enough; though what are called the evergreens—the laurel and the laurestinus and the holly—seem spared to us, notwithstanding the curse, to keep the pathway open for summer that is gone to return again. Take away the sweet evergreens of winter, and the gap between the two summers would seem almost impassable. But now they keep the pathway open for the summer of 1860 to return as the summer of 1861. The bees swarmed in

the air of Syria, finding sweet blossoms all the year, and the grass kept green for the cattle all the seasons; so that it came to be justly depicted as a land overflowing with milk and honey. The grapes in Palestine, of the most delicious flavour, were so common that the people boiled them as vegetables for their meals, as well as made use of them for wine to refresh and cheer them. The terraces upon Lebanon and on the mountain sides rose one over the other, till the fruits of all climes were produced; the fruits of the more northern climes in the cooler air upon the heights of the mountain chains; and the fruits of tropical climes on the lower terraces on the slopes at the foot of the mountains. Palestine seems to have been the spot on which the curse last and most lightly fell.

Having seen, without referring minutely to the original passages of Scripture, what Palestine was, let us now ascertain what it is. Read for information the most interesting sketch that I know, namely, Lamartine's "Travels in the East;" it is full of poetic beauty, of fine thought, accurate and truthful. We find there a picture of what Palestine now is. It is described by him and by others as bare, deserted, riven by the lightning, torn by the earthquake; literally, according to the curse denounced; its rain is become powder and dust as it falls; its sky at this moment is as brass, and its soil, out of whose bosom sprang such beauties, and such flowers, and such crops as I have delineated, is now rent and cloven into fissures by the intolerable and parching heat. Its gardens, in which Solomon walked, are all dismantled, and the place of them is known no more—plague, pestilence, and famine, brood upon some districts of Palestine almost continually. The very sea

seems to retire from the land, as if fearful of being infected by touching it. Its cities are cities of the dead; and its clustering tomb-stones loom up like reefs amidst the eternal sea, as if to show us what a rich argosy has made shipwreck there. The soil is still pregnant with hidden fertility; but there is no hand to cultivate and no reaper to enjoy it. The birds of prey darken the air with their wings; and the wild animals make their lairs in its tombs, its broken columns, its deserted capital. The Bedouin and the Arab are its lords and its dangerous tenants; and no capital will be invested, and no wealth will be laid out in enterprise where the Bedouin and the Arab of the desert are the lords of the land. Its springs are dried up; its magnificent Jordan has lost its ancient roll and volume of water. The bare rocks were once gardens; the mountain-sides and slopes were once covered with vines. What a change since Moses looked forth from Mount Nebo, and admired its beauty, its magnificence, and its fertility! Such is Palestine now. Let us see what it will be. That day is not yet come. It is nearer than a good many think; but whether it be near or remote, we know what it will be by looking through the perspective of unfulfilled prophecy. Hear what God says it will be: "For the Lord will comfort Zion; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing." "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise; thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.'

This is a great thought, that, however lost and ruined that nation may be, it has in its bosom all the hoarded possibilities of a glorious restoration. There is no sin beyond forgiveness; there is no sorrow beyond comfort; there is no land so desolate as to be beyond the reach of restoration by Divine power, if pledged in the prophecies and promises of God.

Having seen what the land was, having seen what it is, having learned from prophecy what it will be, let us now turn our attention to the restoration of its people. "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Its people are described as then the redeemed of the Lord; "redeemed not with gold, nor silver, nor any such corruptible thing; but with the precious blood of a Lamb without spot and without blemish;" redeemed from Satan, from sin—redeemed from the captivity in which they now are, and from the dispersion of which they are now the suffering and the miserable victims; gathered out of every land; brought home in the ships of Tarshish a present to the Lord of hosts, a redeemed people, introduced into a redeemed land—the days of their sorrow, their captivity, and mourning ended for ever." "Then," saith the prophet in this passage, "they shall return." Their land is reserved for them; it is not a new land for a new and a strange people; they return to a land that is their own. There is not a Jew of the least sincerity who does not look to Jerusalem as his capital, and to Palestine as his native land. There is not a Jew, who has one atom of the feeling of a Jew, whose heart does not turn to Zion as the needle inclines,

trembling, but constantly, towards the pole. Why has God kept a people distinct from all nations, with this yearning in their hearts, and these prophecies in their sacred books, unless it be that these prophecies shall be all fulfilled, and these yearnings met, and that they shall return to Zion as their home, to Jerusalem their capital, to Palestine their native land? The Greek is lost; the Roman is absorbed; the Saxon, the Norman, and the Dane are merged in ourselves and in other nationalities, but the Jew remains perfectly distinct. You cannot mistake a Jew—his voice, his features, all indicate his eastern origin; his hopes, and that shadow of an ancestral crime that seems to spread over his countenance, mark the Jew as the man of destiny, reserved for a great purpose, and insulated and kept distinct from the nations, that he may return, and come with songs to Zion, with everlasting joy upon his head. How exquisitely musical are these words: "They shall come with singing unto Zion!" The instant that the signal, the *Jehovah-nissi* elsewhere alluded to, appears on the mountains, the Jews will come singing their own sublime songs, those Psalms of David that have been sung in their synagogues; that have swelled from the banks of the Jordan; that have echoed in musical reverberations in the midst of their magnificent temple; that were heard upon the banks of Chebar, when they hung their harps upon the willows; that you may still hear, though on stammering lips, in their synagogues in their own ancient and magnificent tongue. The Jew will return singing those sublime hymns, when his mouth, in the language of one of them, shall be filled with laughter, and his tongue with melody, because the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Like rivers rushing from a thousand lands,

and finding their confluence in one, the Jews shall rush to Jerusalem, on waves that chime in music as they roll, no more to dry up under a second curse, nor to disappear under the judgments of another invader. But it is also said: "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: sorrow and mourning shall for ever flee away." The language is so beautiful that an attempt to explain it is only to mar it. They shall return with songs of joy, with mourning and sorrow exiled from their hearts for ever; and God shall wipe away all their tears from all their eyes.

Are there any signs of this at the present day? According to the ancient date of prophecy, the seven times of the suffering of the Jews, calculated according to data on which all students of prophecy are agreed, we are led to suppose that not earlier than 1867, and it may be later, it cannot be much later, God will arise, and have mercy upon Zion, and see the set time to favour her come. Our calculations may be wrong; the data on which they are based may be mistaken; in these things we are neither absolutely certain nor infallible; but taking the data that are most probable, and calculating according to a scale that seems indisputable, the hour of Israel's emancipation is rapidly approaching. And when the Jews are restored, then will be the fulness of the Gentiles; their restoration being to us like life from the dead. At this moment many of the Jews are returning to Jerusalem; some of them cultivating the land, others of them seeking to take possession of their capital; and all of them waiting for the mystic Euphrates, that is the Turco-Moslem power to dry up; and the instant that the Crescent has waned, and the Turk lets go his grasp of Palestine, the conflict will begin, a dreadful

conflict, whose it shall be; the Jew will claim it justly as his own, by title-deeds more ancient than any; and God will settle him in the land, for He has said it: "They shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Is it not, too, almost a foreshadow of something of the kind when we read that the steamers of the great powers of Europe at this moment traverse the Mediterranean and the Red Sea; and that this year Palestine is placed in more direct communication with Europe, with Asia, and America? Railways are projected, if not some of them partially executed, between Jaffa and the Persian Gulf, with a branch from Egypt; arrangements that would meet the requirements of some of the most remarkable predictions in God's ancient word. And, what is a very significant phenomenon, the Autocrat of the Russias has upwards of 200,000 Greek Christians in Palestine, with their bishops, their priests, and their monks, his subjects, looking up to him. The powerful Emperor of the French has as many Western Christians—that is, members of the Church of Rome—who are looking up to him. England has a Protestant minister on Mount Zion, its outpost; yet its influence, not in numbers, is greater in the estimate of the Jew, the Syrian, the Greek, and certainly the Turco-Moslem, than the power either of France or of Russia, or of both together. But what is very significant, we are told in Daniel that some powerful one in the last days is to plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain. I do not say this is fulfilled; but here at least is a remarkable fact, that the other year the Sultan made an oblation of

the Church of St. Anne, the Church of the Nativity, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to the Emperor of the French ; and also the site of the Palace of the Knights of St. John, by far the finest square and the most commanding position in Jerusalem. I do not say the Emperor of the French fulfils the prediction of Daniel ; but it is literally true that the Emperor of the French has planted "the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain." Whether he is to play that conspicuous part that some think, I venture not to prophesy ; but many things seem to gather round that land, the burden of such prophecies, the centre of such thrilling interests ; and to give it a very grave importance amidst those deepening complications, which seem as if the stirring of the waters, prior to the descent of the angel to impregnate those waters with all the elements of health, and happiness, and peace.

The prophet, having thus told us first the regeneration of the land, second the restoration of the people, bids us look to God as the author of it all ; as the author of all this to them, and of all that is good to us ; for what does he say ? "I, even I," saith the Lord, "am He that comforteth you." If that be applicable directly to the Jews, it is also morally applicable to us. We also need comfort, and there is only One who is the spring and the fountain of it. In every lot there is a crook ; even the heart that is most frequently bounding has some moments when it is breaking. In some nook of every heart there is some secret, known to itself, that is the source of many an anxious thought, the cause of many a bitter moment. What can heal that heart, what can give comfort ? Every created thing saith, Am I in God's stead ? Every created thing to which you can

have recourse is a broken cistern. But if you look up to Him who is the Comforter, and lean upon his own glorious promise, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you," you shall find a comfort that the world cannot give, that the world cannot mar; and you will be comforted indeed. If it be true that we are more or less the children of sorrow; that we are born to trouble, in consequence of sin, as the sparks fly upward, it is a very interesting question, applicable to each of us Gentiles as well as to the Jews, How does God comfort us? Suppose you are in some great trouble, how will God comfort you? In the first place, He will comfort you by showing you the necessity of that trouble. Do you ever think of this, that there is no chance; and secondly, that not a pang can pierce a human heart for which there is not a needs-be? Not an ache can gnaw the frame; not a grief can pierce the heart; not a shadow can darken the soul, which is not permitted because there was a needs-be as real as that Christ should die upon the cross that you should be saved. It is comfort to know that no affliction is random, that no bereavement is accident; but that each is permitted or sent because it was a medicine essential for our health and happiness. Thus God comforts us. He comforts us in trouble by revealing to us what is the source of trouble. If our troubles spring from the dust, if our sorrows come from the ground, then we cannot construe them or interpret them as anything but chance incidents or strange phenomena, to the explanation of which we have no clue or thread whatever. But we are told that not a trouble can befall us that has not been first in God's bosom; that not a tear can start in the eye that He has not first meted, and estimated, and weighed, and pronounced

to be expedient for us. Admit for one moment that chance is the parent of your troubles—that accident is the author of your bereavements—and what a gloomy place must the grave be! what a sad heart must the mourner's be! what an unhappy man must the victim of trouble be! But when we know that the blow that strikes the heaviest is from our Father's hand; that the sorrow that pierces the heart with the keenest agony lay in his bosom before it received its mission to touch us; surely it is a truth, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you." And in the third place, God comforts us by showing us the end of that trouble. If the sorrows, bereavements, disappointments, griefs, secret and open, had no end, and no grand object, and no great purpose to accomplish, then they would be intolerable; but He tells us, "Though no tribulation for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it worketh out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." He tells us that "all things work for good to them that love God;" and through the mouth of an apostle He has said, "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." And therefore the necessity, the end, and the source of our troubles, revealed to us by God, take away the edge of them, and make at least tolerable that which if inexplicable would be altogether intolerable. He also comforts us by compensatory enjoyments in the meanwhile. Have you not sometimes felt that your bitterest hours, on the reminiscence of them a few years afterwards, were, after all, your sweetest? Have you not often found springs unexpected in the desert? When one joy has died out,

has not another and a brighter taken its place? when one sweet flower has been cut down has not a lovelier and a more fragrant one sprung from its root? There is no condition in which you have ever been, as there is no condition in which a Christian can be placed, in which you will not find that if God takes away one blessing, He gives not another blessing, richer, more beautiful, and more precious. Then "I, even I, am He that comforteth you." God comforts us in the midst of troubles by sanctifying those troubles to us. Not only are they needful, but God makes them work for good. The tear that springs from the heart cleanses the eye, and enables you to see beyond the limited horizon of time, and to catch a glimpse of the glory of that better rest that remains for the people of God. We cannot live always in sunshine; we need shadow. I pity those whose life is one uninterrupted, prosperous career; I pity from my heart the man who has no aches, nor sorrows, nor troubles, nor griefs, nor trials. He may be a Christian; God forbid that I should pronounce; but he wants one of the marks of God's children; for "what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards, and not sons;" but if you have chastisement, then you bear the seal and mark from heaven that you are the children of God, and if children then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. And lastly, He will comfort us, as He will comfort the Jews, by delivering us from all our troubles, and introducing us into a rest more glorious than Canaan ever was, and more bright and beautiful than eye hath seen, or ear hath heard, or man's heart in its happiest imaginings hath ever conceived.

Thus we have Palestine as it was, like the Eden in which we were: we have Palestine as it is, like the earth that we now dwell on; we have Palestine as it will be, like the Rest that remaineth for the people of God; we have the Jew redeemed, as we must be, by precious blood; we have his return to his land, and our restoration to our rest, by the guiding hand of the Spirit of God; and lest our hearts grow too heavy, and our spirits despair, and our exile become intolerable, and our yearning for our homes too intense to enable us to fulfil life's duties, He comforts Jew and Gentile now by intermingling with our troubles great comforts, by interweaving with our darkness bright lights; and by showing us that our afflictions are all needed, and are all sanctified, and that they are all working together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose.

LECTURE XV.

ENGLAND'S FUTURE AND MISSION.

Our country is neither to become effete, nor the prey of the foreigner. It is the Israel of Christendom.

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."—ISAIAH xlix. 22, 23.

THE subject of the promise to Israel is the restoration of the Jews. This restoration is delineated at greater length, and with far greater minuteness, in a previous chapter of this book, to which we will refer—namely, the 18th chapter—where we read as follows: "Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden

down, whose lands the rivers have spoiled !” Omitting, at present, the rest of the chapter, let us come down to the end : “ In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.” I will ask attention less to a popular exposition, and more to a simple and clear analysis of the remarkable words contained in the 18th chapter. I look upon this chapter of Isaiah as the exposition of the 60th chapter. Lately I have read upon it an admirable letter, written by Bishop Horsley ; and, secondly, a very learned volume discussing its meaning, written by a clergyman, a friend of mine, the Rev. Mr. Chamberlain, of Bolton. I have read both with intense interest and profit. Guided by these I want to show, first, that the people spoken of here are the Jews ; and, secondly, that they are to be presented to the Lord, in the language of this chapter, as a present, as an offering ; and that this is to be done by a people who are called a people that “ send ambassadors,” which people are to bring them in “ vessels of bulrushes,” and present them an offering unto the Lord. I will try to show the meaning of these words. But first let us take the 18th chapter, as Mr. Chamberlain does, in reverse ; and begin by expounding and unfolding the meaning of the last verse, which is to a certain extent a repetition of the first : “ In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled ;” this

people shall be presented unto the Lord. Bishop Horsley justly remarks that the 11th verse of the previous chapter refers to the dispersion of Israel by the Romans; and that the allusion to this dispersion leads, as it almost always does, to a prediction of their final restoration. So that the 17th chapter is in all respects historically connected with the imagery and substance of the 18th.

Now let us examine these expressions; "a people scattered;" "a people peeled;" "a people meted out;" "a people trodden under foot;" "a people terrible from the beginning." I have analyzed and studied each word thus translated; and I will give you the result. The word "scattered" is applied in the Bible to the sowing of seed, to the scattering of corn seed upon the earth; and denotes something spread over a large area. It is also applied in the sense of "extended;" that is, extended in time as well as spread over space; and therefore the idea conveyed is, a people scattered over every land, scattered like the seeds of spring over the length and breadth of the bosom of the globe, and this process extended over many years; they there remaining ungathered until a time specified in the sequel. The word "peeled" is the next feature. What is meant by it? Professor Lee, one of the ablest Hebrew scholars, says it means *ruined*; another says it means *stripped naked*; Mr. Chamberlain says it means *worn down and galled by affliction*; and Bishop Horsley says the Spanish Bible gives the exact meaning of the original Hebrew, "a people dragged about by force, and their hair pulled out by the roots." Combine all these, and you have the picture of a people who are maltreated; whose teeth in the

history of England have been extracted, that their purses might be emptied for our benefit; whose maltreatment is a proverb; and whose symbol, Sir Walter Scott says, is the flying fish which has no peace either in the sea or in the air, either in the heights or in the depths. The text expression is "meted out and trodden under foot." The word "meted out" is translated literally in another place, "line upon line;" and it denotes a nation lined with sorrow as with furrows. It is used in the sense of judgment: "I will stretch on Jerusalem the line of Samaria;" that is, I will thus destroy it. "Line upon line" is also employed to denote the limit of judgment or affliction; and therefore, Mr. Chamberlain says, it is a people under judicial treatment, prescribed as to its length and its limits in the lines of ancient prophecy, beyond which it cannot go, and on this side of the exhaustion of which it cannot possibly cease. The next expression is, "a people terrible from the beginning." The literal translation, says Bishop Horsley, is "a people awfully remarkable." The expression "from the beginning," is scarcely correct; it is literally, "from that day forward;" and the date of the "day forward" is not that of the prophecy, but of their being "brought as a present to the Lord of hosts in Zion;" meaning, that from the day when they shall be recovered, restored, and reinstated in Zion, they shall appear then a people awfully remarkable; that is to say, they will present a brilliant close to a bitter and disastrous career; and the people of every nation shall gaze and marvel that, once the scoff and the offscourings of Christendom, they have become the joy of the earth, the beauty of the nations, the admiration of all lands. The next mark of them is,

"whose land the rivers have spoiled." The preceding chapter, the 17th, closes with a similar expression, "This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us." Now if we take the phrase, "the rivers have spoiled," in the strict, rigid, literal sense, there is no land, either Ethiopia, Egypt, or Palestine, of which it can be said that the rivers have destroyed it. Never Palestine, for the overflowings of Jordan do not injure it; certainly not Egypt, for the overflowings of the Nile benefit it. We must therefore take the phrase, "Whose land the rivers have spoiled," in a figurative sense; and accordingly when we refer to the Scriptures we find that rivers and floods are employed to denote hostile forces. Thus, in Isaiah viii. 7, we read: "Now, therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory;" that is, hostile forces. Again, in Isaiah lix. 19, we read: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood." And Bishop Horsley in his letter says very justly: "Rivers, that is, armies of devastating conquerors, have destroyed it." Read the history of Palestine, and you find all historically fulfilled. After the Roman, the Saracen and Turco-Moslem overflowed the length and breadth of Palestine, and exterminated the thousands that the victorious eagles of Rome had spared. After them the Crusaders, under Walter the Penniless and Peter the Hermit, going forth to deliver the tomb of a dead Christ, forgetting they crucified afresh a living Christ, inflicted devastation incalculable upon that land. Then the armies of France have trodden it; the boom of French guns has echoed from Mount Zion to Tabor, and from Tabor to Olivet; and since that time, the

hoof of the Arab and the Bedouin steed, the bare foot of the monk, and the tread of the haughty Moslem, and recently the sword of the Druse, have successively devastated that land, and left upon its bosom the marks of the floods that have torn, and destroyed, and spoiled it. Thus, in all these expressions, is the irresistible proof that this is the picture of the very people described in Leviticus xxvi., where we may find all the curses that are to light upon them, and the devastation that is to overtake their land.

Having thus identified the people here described as the Jews, let me turn your attention to the other fact, that this people is to be presented an offering to the Lord of hosts on Mount Zion. This idea is variously expressed. Kings shall be their nursing fathers, and the shoulders of the Gentiles shall carry them home. We have the same thought expressed in Isaiah lxvi. 19, in these words: "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." Then the 20th verse: "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts;" or as it might be rendered, "swift chariots;" "to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord." And the time of this is specified in the 22nd verse: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Now this word translated in

one place "offering," in another place translated "present," is the Hebrew word *Mincha*, which was the offering presented in Zion, laid before the Lord, and irreclaimable for ever; once presented it was not to be recalled. And we read constantly of people being made an offering. The apostle speaks of the Gentiles being made an offering to God; and in the 72nd Psalm, that Psalm which describes the brilliant scenes of the millennial day, it is said: "The kings of Tarshish"—I will show you who Tarshish by-and-by is—"and of the isles shall bring presents." What presents? This people to the Lord. "The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." These passages show that a present shall be made of a people peeled and meted out, whose land the rivers have spoiled.

Having ascertained the offering, or the people, let us now turn our attention to those who are to make the offering, described at the commencement of the 18th of Isaiah in these words: "Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia; that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled." These are to "present them as an offering to the Lord on Mount Zion or in Palestine." The word "woe:" is an unhappy rendering. It is the very same Hebrew word that we find in the beginning of the 55th of Isaiah, thus translated: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." I do not deny that the Hebrew word thus translated occa-

sionally denotes *woe*; but in the 55th of Isaiah, at the 1st verse, and in other passages, it also denotes *Ho*; that is, a cry to demand or to summon attention. And therefore this word, as Bishop Louth and others justly remark, ought to be translated, "Ho, thou land;" that is, "Listen to me, thou land." In the next place it is "a land shadowing with wings." Constantly in prophecy the perfect tense is employed to denote the future. Thus in the 53d of Isaiah we read: "He was despised and rejected of men;" that is, he shall be; the prophetic past embosoming the unfulfilled future. The literal translation of this passage is, "Ho, thou land that wilt shadow with wings." That this interpretation is correct, I may quote the evidence of Bishop Horsley, who says: "In the sense of shadowing, protect or preserve." The Hebrew word translated "shadowing" means literally "rustling like the beat of ascending wings." Lamartine, in his "Visit to Jerusalem," says he saw "an eagle whose wings flapped with a noise resembling the shaking of the sails against the masts of a ship." But we shall see the use of this by further prosecuting the meaning of the words, "shadowing with wings." First, how is it used in the Bible? Let us gather these evidences. "The sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings;" therefore one idea in shadowing with wings is protection. Secondly, speed is implied in it: "Ye have seen what I did unto Egypt, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you away." You have two great ideas, therefore, conveyed in that: first, protection; and secondly, carriage or flight from danger to a place of safety. With that instinctive sagacity as well as scholarship which characterized all he wrote,

Now of the sea & of the ships & of the sailors

Bishop Horsley says: "It alludes to something in the character or habit of the people; so that they must have understood it right who take the wings to denote the sails of numerous vessels overshadowing the surface of the ocean." In other words, the inference we draw is, that this land invited by God is a maritime power, possessed of countless ships; whose sails, like the white wings of doves, the symbols of protection and peace, cover with their shadows the width and breadth of the ocean itself. Another passage which casts some light upon the words I have already tried to analyze is in the 8th verse of the 60th chapter of Isaiah, where he says: "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee." I gather therefore that this land is, first, a maritime power; and, secondly, that it is an island somewhere on the bosom of the deep, thus summoned. But let us mark another feature; "that sendeth ambassadors by sea;" not that once sent, nor that will send; but it is the dominant characteristic of this island, this maritime power, that it is in the habit of having intercourse with distant lands, and the far-off continents of the world; sending its representatives to every court, and its ambassadors across every ocean.

It is said, in the next place, that it shall bring them "in vessels of bulrushes." "That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered

and peeled." It ought to be literally translated as follows : " Ho, thou land that wilt protect with thy white sails as wings, a people who are now far beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, scattered, and peeled, and meted out ; a land whose feature it is to be in the habit of having intercourse through its ambassadors with all lands ; go as swift messengers in vessels of bulrushes, in order to bring that scattered and peeled nation out of every land, a present to the Lord of hosts." The next question is, What is the meaning of the word " bulrushes ?" First of all, if it refers to the boats used upon the Nile, which were made of the papyrus, called the bibulous papyrus, or the water-drinking, or the thirsty papyrus, how could such be called swift which were very slow ? Besides, eastern nations are noted for the slowness and solemnity of their processions ; and the language, therefore, is wholly inapplicable to anything that could occur in Egypt, or to anything that can identify the land that shadows with wings, as some have tried to identify it with the land of Egypt. The vessels of bulrushes, therefore, must be something fitted to navigate broad seas ; they cannot be the vessels of papyrus that are used in navigating the Nile. Now the Hebrew words translated " vessels of bulrushes" are *Pelei Gomé*. I believe the origin of our translators so rendering it is this : the literal meaning of *Pelei Gomé* is " vessels that drink water," or " that feed upon water," or " vessels the drinkers." Our translators in 1611, upwards of two hundred years ago, were puzzled to find out what in the world this could mean ; they recollected that the bulrush is a water-absorbing plant ; it is called in common phrase the bibulous papyrus ;

and they therefore thought that the best rendering would be, supposing that it referred to Egypt, vessels built of the bibulous or water-feeding bulrush. Schleusner, a very celebrated Greek scholar, a German, almost anticipated the better rendering, for he says in his lexicon, "swift packet-boats of some description." The idea in his mind seems to have been this. Job, in that splendid description of the war horse, says, "He drinketh up the ground," or, he swalloweth the ground; that is, his speed is so great that the ground disappears as if he drank it up; and his idea, therefore, was, that these vessels, instead of being vessels of bulrushes, moving sluggishly along the canals of Egypt, must be swift packet-boats. But when we come to modern times, and look at the word in the light of modern science, it will be found that a just and literal translation is the steam-ship of modern times. For what is the steamer? A vessel whose food, whose drink, whose nutriment, whose propulsive power, whose motive force from beginning to end is water. If, then, this be the correct translation, it would run thus: "Ho, thou land that wilt one day shadow with wings a people peeled and meted out, and whose land has been torn into pieces, and battered and made hard by the feet of successive invaders: go to that people; lend them your swiftest steam-ships; bring them at that day when the signal is hung out of the skies that calls God's ancient people home; lend your aid to the Lord of hosts; consecrate all the brilliant discoveries of science, all the resources of your wealth, your power, and your means of conveyance; and carry from east and west, from north and south, this people as a present to the Lord of hosts in the midst of Jerusalem;

there to be reconstituted, and thence never to be expelled."

We come to another inquiry here, which is very interesting. I stated that the 60th chapter of Isaiah is very much parallel with this 18th chapter; and I quoted these words from it: "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first." A very vital question before us is, Who is this Tarshish? We have Tarshish alluded to in the 60th chapter as being a country with ships; we read of it in the 38th of Ezekiel as being in alliance with Dedan, and Sheba, or India; and having to oppose an eruption from the north, destined or attempting to avert the settlement of the Jews in their own land. We read in the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel, that the land of Gog and Magog, Rosh and Tubal—Russia beyond all dispute, as all commentators say—is to make an effort to take possession of the east; and that some land called Tarshish, with its ships—Tarshish, with the "young lions thereof," is to resist the irruption of northern Russia into the sunny plains of the east; and with the aid of the Jews to repel and triumph over them. This leads us therefore to try to fathom who this Tarshish can be. First, we find it employed in its literal sense as the place to which Jonah fled; but we find no literal place existing now of which such attributes and acts can be predicated as those that are assigned to Tarshish. The inference therefore of Bishop Horsley and of Mr. Chamberlain, established by innumerable quotations from the word of God is, that this Tarshish in prophecy is none other than our own country. The name Tartessus was originally given to a town close to Gibraltar: and it is very singular that Gibraltar has always played a con

spicuous part in the past history of our country since we had it; and that the loss of it, as every one will tell you, is the loss of the key of the Mediterranean. It is said also of this Tarshish, that it is a place of gold, and of iron, and of purple, and of linen, and of blue, and of all colours. This nation is an island; secondly, it is a mercantile one, with innumerable fleets; thirdly, I gather from these passages to which I have referred, that it is to be a manufacturing place, with textile fabrics, with exquisite dyes of all kinds; that it is also to be a mining place, having gold and silver, and tin and iron; for these are the very words employed by the sacred writer; and lastly, it is to have some singular mark, as laid down in Ezekiel; "with the young lions thereof." It is a constant habit in Scripture to describe a country by its symbols. Thus, for instance, we have the eagle as the representative of Rome; we have the bee the representative of Assyria; we have the crocodile the representative of Egypt; we have the goat the type and representative of Macedon; we have three frogs the symbols of France; and we have the lions *passant* and *rampant*, the symbols of England. If we combine all these elements together, we shall find them leading us to identify our own land as the land of glorious promises, a nation charged with a grand mission; having a destiny before it, and a service to render unprecedented in the history of nations that have passed away; and therefore these irresistible inferences follow, first of all, if this restoration of the Jews is to be at the end of this present Christian economy; if, as Mr. Chamberlain thinks, it cannot be earlier than 1864, and cannot be much later; if the country that is to lend its ships, its wealth, its influence, and all its vast territorial

power, to carry back the sons of Zion to their home, and to reinstate them in the midst of Jerusalem, be our own beloved land, a maritime, a manufacturing land, a land of ships, a land of textile fabrics, a land of iron, and gold, and silver, then the conclusion must be most gratifying to every Briton ; ENGLAND WILL BE SPARED AMID THE CRASH OF NATIONS, AND EMERGE FROM THE CONFLICT RADIANT WITH GREATER GLORY. Whilst all the continent of Europe, and everything on it, gives token of trouble, whether we look to Russia, again meditating on Constantinople, because the gate to the East ; or France, seeking accession to her territory and the Mediterranean for a French lake ; or to Austria, or to Italy, or to Sicily, we see all the elements of an earthquake that will shake Europe through its length and its breadth. But what a glorious hope that our country, reserved for this grand mission, will be spared to the end a manufacturing, a mercantile, a rich, a prosperous, and we trust, a God-fearing land, like " the harpers on the glassy sea," lifting up its anthem peal of praise to God, when the nations of the earth are smitten as by the four winds of heaven. If this be so, it strengthens what I showed from the Apocalypse ; it strengthens what I have asserted, or rather printed recently, but which has been found fault with, that our country separated from the ten kingdoms of the Papacy at the great Reformation ; and whilst the great continental nations that belong to Babylon are judged, our country, never having rejoined them, remains exempt from their punishment. She may be chastened ; what daughter is she whom the mother chasteneth not ? She may suffer, that she may be purified ; she may feel the breath of the tempest that sweeps past ; she may taste the pres-

sure of the tribulation that overtakes continental Europe; but I believe on these two grounds, first, because she left the apostasy at the great Reformation; secondly, because we are reserved for the very last day to lend all our greatness to carry Zion home; that our country's sun will go on brightening like the shining light; and that Old England's glory will not set till it melt into the splendour of millennial and lasting day. If this be so, may we not, you say, cease to care about anything that may contribute to its strength, its safety, or its protection? Not at all. I know the seeming contradiction or inconsistency. It will be said, If it be an ascertained and demonstrable fact that our country is not to fail, and that every hostile army that may light upon its shores must be triumphantly beaten back, then had we not better burn our navy, and disband our troops, and put an end to all this raising of volunteers, when we know that all is perfectly safe? Such would be the logic of fools, not the inference of Christians. Because believers were chosen before the foundation of the world to heaven, it does not follow that therefore they are not to believe, therefore they are not to pray, therefore they are not to watch. Because it is God that takes care of us, it is not the less our duty to take care of ourselves. The decree of God and the duty of man are not antagonistic. It is because "He works in us" that we are to "work out our salvation" with fear and with trembling. Fatalism is folly. To quote prophecy, which tells us our destiny, as the guide to our duties, is absurd. I appeal to prophecy for what will cheer, and brighten, and encourage; I appeal to precepts for what is our duty devolving upon us at every time and in every place. That nation that will not try to defend itself is

not worthy of being defended. And therefore what our country is now doing, strengthening its army and navy, and raising its volunteers, is the duty prescribed by common sense, and the resources warranted in God's holy word. If our country is thus to endure, what becomes us? Because God is so good, and has reserved for us so grand a destiny, let us make ourselves better and more worthy of his favor. Let us aid schools and missions at home and abroad; let us rise with Christianity into all heights, descend with it into all depths; let us feel that our duty is to summon every creature to the Saviour, and to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation over all the land; and to make our country increasingly what with all its faults we thank God it is becoming more and more—a model nation to the rest of the earth. I know our sins; I can see our countless faults; I am not insensible to the black shadows that lie upon the edge of its bright lights; but I must compare it with other lands. Compare it with France, compare it with Austria, compare it with Italy, compare it with Russia, and it is not comparison, it is absolute contrast. And what has made our country great? An open Bible in our own noble Saxon tongue. It is the word of God in England's heart that is the secret of the splendour and the stability of the crown on England's brow; it is that open Bible in the poor man's hut and in the great man's palace, out of which come all the elements that have made our country "first flower of the earth, first gem of the sea." We give God the glory; we give Him the praise. We should not, therefore, relax in our duties. Never is the soldier so brave as when he is certain of victory; never is man so powerless as when he anticipates defeat. Because God will

keep us, let us seek increasingly to honour Him, and to gather to Him a people that shall be our strength and our assistance in that day when God ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

The roll of England's conquering drum-beat that encircles the earth will continue to the end; the boom of her guns will be still heard, the signal of deliverance to the oppressed and of vengeance on the oppressor. Her flag will be unfurled in all winds, and her anchors drop on every strand, and her sun will not set till it is lost in the rising splendours of that sunrise that will have no western declension. With all its sins and faults it is a noble heritage—a land in which to live and die and leave one's children sure of the patronage of fair opportunity—a land in which one can lie down beneath the overshadowing pinions of the public peace and rise amid the protection of a pure and enlightened public sentiment. Here sovereignty is fatherhood and loyalty is love. Law never becomes tyranny and liberty rarely degenerates into license. England is the Pharos of Europe, the lighthouse of the earth. Founded on the Everlasting Rock she holds up the imperishable light of an open Bible; and in its light the ships of all lands pass and repass on the sea of life with thankful salutations.

The great hurricanes of successive revolutions have struck it, and spent their force on it, and retired. The great sea-waves of the agitated nations have smitten it and recoiled in spray, shattered and broken. Shoals of priests, and flocks of cardinals and bishops and Jesuits, attracted by its brightness, and anxious to quench it, have rushed at it like the wild sea-gulls, only to dash themselves in pieces, and fall dead at its base.

She still says:—

"Sail on, sail on, ye stately ships,
And with your floating bridge the ocean span;
Be mine to guard this light from all eclipse,
Be yours to bring man nearer unto man."

LECTURE XVI.

THE APOSTASIES IN EUROPE.

The safety of our country is synchronous with the removal of the corrupt churches of Christendom.

“All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye. For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling-place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth; and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.”—ISAIAH xviii. 3—6.

TARSHISH, we are told, is to bring home God's ancient people to their own land, in her ships, and there replace them as a present to the Lord of hosts. The Lord says, in Isaiah xlix.: “Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daugh-

ters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; and thou shalt know I am the Lord." In Isaiah lx. 9: "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish."

The whole of Isaiah lx. describes the glory that has not yet come to Jerusalem; and, therefore, Tarshish is to be in existence, and powerful at the time of its end. A very important question then is, What is the Tarshish constantly spoken of, not in one place, but in several, as the nationality that is to bring this people, peeled, and scattered, and broken, as a present to the Lord of hosts; and that, so far, is to enable them to fear his name from the west, and to see his glory from the rising of the sun? Mr. Chamberlain has brought very great research and learning to this special subject. I have followed his reference with care. I state nothing original, if new. The Tarshish of prophecy, mentioned in Ezekiel and Isaiah, is not any one country that existed then, or belonged at all to the ancient world, before the Christian era. In prophecy, it is some great country, great at the time of the restoration of the Jew—maritime, manufacturing; a country with vast fleets, and with possessions in Dedan, in Sheba, and in Seba, which is now part of our empire. This country Tarshish, which also comes up in the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel, at the last crash of nations and crisis of the world is, I am satisfied, our own country, Great Britain—which separated from what are called

the ten kingdoms into which the whole of apostate Europe was anciently divided, at the era of the Reformation. A tenth part of the great city—that is, the great city Babylon—comprehending the ten toes of the image, or ten kingdoms, the decem-regal Babylon, separated from the rest, and stood aloof, and would have nothing more to do with Rome. This was our own land; and upon that ground I believe, when God's judgment shall come upon the decem-regal Babylon, or the ten kingdoms of the apostasy, that England, or Britain rather, will be spared, and remain comparatively unscathed. I proceed to show, from another point of view, and a very interesting one, that as the restoration of the Jews is to occur at the close of this present economy; and as the restorer of that people, in its steam-ships, and under the shelter of its shadowing wings, or white canvas, is to be England; and as this country, when it restores that dispersed people, shall be in full possession of all its maritime, commercial, and social strength, with its Eastern possessions un-reduced; our country will live in all its national integrity to the end; and that, at the close of our present economy, it will be the mightiest, the most honored, and the most prosperous nation upon earth. However right it may be to have recourse to all the means of its defence which common sense suggests, and which our rulers are now adopting, yet I have not the least doubt of our ultimate emergence from the severe conflicts into which we may be plunged; and that the sun of our country will not set till it is lost in the splendour of that sunshine that has no western declension. So far we have arrived in explaining this prophecy, I will now endeavour to submit what seems

a textual and impartial explanation of the 3rd, and 4th, and 5th verses of this same prophecy.

First of all, we find an appeal in the 3rd verse, "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye." This is an appeal to the whole world to witness the next act of the grand drama which is to take place at that crisis. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." The eminent prelate from whom I have several times quoted, Bishop Horsley, says: "The prophecy in verse three announces a display of God's power and providence, which shall be notorious over all the world; the mountains on which it is to take place are the mountains of Israel;" the mountains, not naming them, because well known. The whole world, like spectators in the ascending tiers of a vast amphitheatre, is to look down, with amazement and awe, many with alarm, many with trust and confidence in God, upon these last scenes on the world's arena, scenes which end a dispensation in which we have so great a stake, of which angels are the spectators, and eternity the culminating issue. Jehovah calls on all nations to witness Him, while he lifteth up a standard. Let us try to discover what the standard is. The Hebrew word for standard is Niss. That word—and you will see how fastidiously exact, if I may use the phrase, is Scripture language—occurs in Exodus xvii. 15, where we read: "Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi." The last is the same word which is here translated *ensign*; "Jehovah, our ensign." Again, in Numbers xxi. 8, God says to Moses: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it" for a niss—that is, "place it

for an ensign;" the very word used here. But what does the brass serpent suggest? It reminds us of Him of whom it is the type and the symbol. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have eternal life." I therefore infer that this standard that is to be lifted up upon the mountains, which all the world is to see, which is to be the rallying banner under which the dispersed of Israel are to gather, and around which they are to cluster, is none other than the "sign of the Son of man," the manifestation or apocalypse of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And, accordingly, we read what confirms this in Zechariah xiv. 3: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet"—now mark the words—"and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Now, when does this vast disruption take place? We are told in the 2nd verse of the 14th chapter of Zechariah: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." And then it is stated in the 7th verse, that "it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor

night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." The prediction goes on; "Men shall dwell in Jerusalem, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." We thus read what will fulfil the prediction of this ensign, lifted upon the mountains of Israel as the rallying standard to the dispersed and scattered hosts of Israel. But the language in the chapter on which I am commenting goes further. There is to be an ensign; but in the last line of the 3rd verse it is also said: "And when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye;" that is the language of war. There is not only to be the revelation of Jehovah-nissi—that is, God our ensign—but there is also to be a time of war or of conflict. Now, in Revelation xvi. 14, there is a remarkable reference to this very period: "They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth"—that is, the Roman earth, the decem-regal earth—"and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle." It is, in the original, *πολεμον*, not *μαχη*, "to the *war* of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together," or, "they gathered themselves together," into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. The picture of that war, as given in Revelation, is the most awful and terrific that ever occurred. But that you may see how these two things, the lifting up of an ensign and the blowing of a trumpet, are associated amid war and conflict with the restoration of dispersed Israel, we turn to one or two passages in this very book of Isaiah. You will thus see that this is no solitary or

singular instance, but one parallel with many other passages. Isaiah xi. 10: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse;" who is that? the Root and the Offspring of David; that is, Christ: "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ENSIGN of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ENSIGN for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Here you have the ensign fulfilling the very function which is specified in chap. xviii. "If we refer to Isaiah xlix. 22, we shall find the same idea: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my STANDARD to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." In Isaiah lix. 19, we find the very same allusion: "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy"—that is, the enemy that compasses Jerusalem, namely, Rosh, and Meshech, and Tubal, and Gomer and his bands—"when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a STANDARD against him." And what follows? "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." Let us also look at Isaiah lxii. 10, and we shall see

how full the Bible is of that very thought: "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up an ENSIGN or a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with Him; and his work before Him. And they shall call them"—that is, the recovered Jews,—“The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out; A city not forsaken.” Here, then, we have several passages all in different ways embodying the same great thought; but all unquestionably teaching, with a harmony and unity most striking, that this divine Ensign is to be manifested on the mountains of Judea, amid war and judgment; and that it is to be the rallying and the attractive centre for all the dispersed of Israel. I will add the words of Bishop Horsley, where he says: “An ensign or standard lifted up on the mountains, and a trumpet blown on the hills; the standard of the Cross, the trumpet of the Gospel: the resort to the standard is the effect of the summons, and that summons will be universal. The people to whom this message is sent shall be conducted in pomp as a present to Jehovah in that place on which the standard will be erected; in Mount Zion.” So much, then, for the universal summons, and for the rallying standard to be erected on the mountains of Israel.

The 4th verse is a little difficult, but I think it will be made plain by noticing, what does not often occur in our translation, a slight deviation from the strict meaning of the original. “For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my

dwelling-place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." Our translators were not satisfied themselves that they had rendered the original Hebrew in this verse by the strict and exact English meaning; for in the margin they say, "heat after rain;" but by some misapprehension they have translated it in the body of the text, "like a clear heat upon herbs." Now the word rendered herbs is the same word as that in Genesis translated "Let there be light;" and therefore the right translation here is not "heat upon herbs," which seems to me to mean nothing, but "like a clear, intense brightness, or glowing splendour." Hence Gesenius, who is what is called, a rationalist Christian, or one who takes a very low view of the Gospel, says the right translation is "the light of the sun;" not "heat upon herbs." And Dr. Henderson, an eminent Nonconformist minister, who has written upon Isaiah, says it ought to be translated "the shining of the sun." And Professor Lee, one of the most learned Hebrew scholars, perhaps, that ever lived, says, "When the heat shall become clear as the sunlight." And Mr. Chamberlain, guided by all these, holds that the right rendering of that passage, literally and strictly, is: "For so the Lord said unto me; I will take my rest; and descend upon my dwelling-place above the brightness of the sun, and like a cloud of dew in the season of harvest." And hence Mr. Chamberlain regards it, I think most justly, as a brilliant prophecy of that very manifestation of the Messiah which the ensign, or the standard, sets forth, when He comes in his glory for Israel's restoration. It is very confirmatory of this idea that similar phrases occur denoting a manifestation of the Saviour. For instance, Paul,

describing his conversion when Christ was revealed to him, and spoke to him, says : " At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me." That is the very thought that exhausts the verse we are considering. " I will descend in a light above the brightness of the sun." In Luke's Gospel we read : " The glory of the Lord shone round about them ;" the very same idea. Again, in Psalm lxxx. we read : " Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." And when speaking of the destruction of the mystic Babylon at the end of this dispensation, we read that the Lord will consume that apostasy " by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming." Here Jehovah manifests himself with a brightness exceeding the splendour of the noon-day sun, consuming them that are his enemies, but illuminating and sheltering them that are his own.

The expression which Mr. Chamberlain thinks is the just rendering of the other passage, " Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest," is meant to show that whilst this manifestation of Christ will be intolerable splendour, destroying by its brightness those that are his enemies, it will, over his own beloved ones—his once dispersed and trodden-down people, but then reclaimed and regathered to the mountains of Jerusalem—be a cloud of dew, a cloud that will cover them, and temper through its medium the intense beams of his splendour transmitted through its fleecy folds ; so that while the light is untempered as it smites his foes, it will be softened and subdued as it falls upon them that are his own. In Hosea vi. there is a reference to this very phenomenon. The Jews cry, " Come, and let us

return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning"—that is, the bright light—"and He shall come down unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Thus Christ comes as a consuming splendour on his foes; but that splendour softened and subdued, as by the mists on the borders of a cloud, so that it shall not hurt, but, on the contrary, refresh his own.

The next transaction is thus told: "For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, He shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches." The harvest of wheat is constantly referred to in Scripture as the ingathering of God's own; but the vintage harvest, which is the reference here, is constantly spoken of in Scripture as the harvest of retribution. The Vine is the great symbol of the Church universal: before the Gentile Church was grafted in it was the symbol of the Jewish Church: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it." But after the Jews had rejected Christ, and when all, both Jews and Gentiles, that believe in Christ, constituted one church, then Christ said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He pruneth; and other branches, that are dead and worthless, He cutteth off." The language used here denotes that when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening, he is to cut off certain sprigs or branches.

In Revelation we have a parallel passage: "Thrust in the sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." This is done after he cuts off the sprigs and the branches; the sprigs with pruning hooks, and takes away and cuts down the branches. And what does he do with them? He leaves them on the mountains for the beasts of the earth to tread under foot, and for the fowls of heaven to perch on them as broken branches; and all the beasts of the earth to seek shelter among them. The idea set before us is this, that just before the grape is ripe, when it is a little sour, that is, just before the harvest of the earth arrives, of which the angels are the reapers, when He gathers the corn into barns, and leaves the tares to the burning, He will cut off the sprigs and the branches that exhaust the sap and impoverish the grape. If the vine be the Church of Christ, then the branches that do not bear fruit are those apostate or antichristian offshoots which nominally, and ostensibly, and by baptism, if I may vary the figure, belong to it, but in their doctrines deny the truth, and in their practice pervert and corrupt it. Who are these? The two great apostasies—speaking on a church scale; for this relates not to individuals but to corporate bodies. The vine is the church universal; and certain branches of that vine are the two great apostasies: the one in the West, of which the powerful French Emperor is the imperial representative and advocate; and the other in the East, of which the Autocrat of all the Russias is the head. Now what we are led to expect is, that at the close of this economy, just before the grape ripens—and that it may ripen—just upon the eve of the harvest, these great powers, as is very fully brought out in

Ezekiel, are allied and co-operative to make war in connection with Palestine, to try to prevent the return of God's people to their own land. This country, as far as we have gathered from the past, is to be the champion of Israel, and to carry home its regathered tribes. The two great apostasies spoken of in the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel are to try to prevent the accomplishment of God's purposes, and oppose and resist every effort to replant Israel in their own land. Ezekiel xxxix. 22 and 29 proves that the ingathering of Israel is an event synchronous with the era and parallel with the circumstances of which we are now speaking. "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them and gave them into the hand of their enemies; so fell they all by the sword." In the 25th verse: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people"—the Gentiles—"and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide

my face any more from them ; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." That there is to be at this very era, when God receives by the ships of Tarshish this present to himself, some great conflict, is evident from the 38th of Ezekiel, at the 2nd verse, where we read : " Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal ; and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords ; Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them ; all of them with shield and helmet ; Gomer, and all his bands ; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands ; and many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them." At the 14th verse : " Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God ; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it ? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army ; and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel as a cloud to cover the land : it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes." Now, before I proceed further, let me state that there is not the least

doubt, in the first place, that the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel relate to the very last days, and to the restoration of Israel, and the interposition of the powers named in this chapter to prevent it. But who are these powers? There is not the least doubt that the name Gog denotes the Caucasians, or inhabitants on the mountains of Caucasus; that the Tubal, and the Meshech, and the Rosh, denote Russia; Moscow derived from Meshech, and Tubal from Tobolsk. That these are the northern peoples of Russia is beyond all dispute; commentators have no doubt and no difficulty about that. But there is to be associated with this great power from the north another power: "Gomer and all his bands." Gomer is the origin of Germany; for Germany is simply Gomer land. I do not now spend time in tracing it geographically and historically, having done so before. The leading power there is Austria. It has been shown by Mr. Chamberlain that France is simply an offshoot from Gomer land. Hence the impression he has formed is that, at the close of this economy, Austria, and France, and Russia are to coalesce, and are to play that momentous part in the crisis of the world which is referred to in the chapter on which I have been commenting, and is still more fully delineated in the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel; while the ultimate result of their combination is their total and entire overthrow. Now I stated what has already been printed when the Russian war broke out, that the destiny of Russia is eastward. I hold the same conviction unaltered. I then stated that this very chapter described the then movement of the Russian Autocrat, and suggested the failure which would be the result of his first and premature effort. God says: "I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws."

Russia has accordingly been turned back ; it has been prostrated for a time. But does any one who reads the ordinary channels of intelligence fail to see that the old complaint, precisely the old and ominous but too well-founded pretext is up again—the sufferings of the Christians in Turkey? Constantinople is the gate to Palestine and the East; for as soon as the Turco-Moslem crescent has finally waned, Palestine will cease to belong to Turkey, and will be as it now threatens—the bone of controversy among the nations of the earth. This is not a recent guess from existing political complications, but an inference six years old from these very passages on which I am now commenting. And the result will be, as Mr. Chamberlain thinks, France under its present dynasty—for he believes France the great King of the south with Austria—and Russia, the northern Autocrat, shall coalesce, and come up against Palestine. They will not frustrate this country's grand destiny or mission, which is to carry Israel back to its own home, but will themselves be the subject of a judgment and a slaughter unprecedented in the history of the world ; for we read in the 39th chapter of Ezekiel, at the 1st verse, the following account of what will take place : “ Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal ; and I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel ; and I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the

people that is with thee ; I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field ; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles ; and they shall know that I am the Lord." At the 17th verse ; "And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God ; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come ; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God. And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them." So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward." The result of it is that these coalesced powers will be utterly destroyed upon the mountains of Israel, amidst a slaughter the most terrific that has ever occurred in the history of the world.

We can see, however, amidst all the complications and scenes of the present, the brightness of that light which will yet emerge into everlasting day ; we can see that no force, or enchantment, shall prevail against Israel : and that our country, pursuing its sublime-mis-

sion, and Israel restored to its own land, shall the latter dwell safely, and the former not fail until it melt into the millennial day.

If we read the 12th and 14th chapters of Zechariah, we shall see there unfolded at length the very thoughts I am now stating.

This warfare, which ends in the destruction of Meshech, and Tubal, and Gomer, and all his bands, as the 38th chapter of Ezekiel shows—in consequence of Tarshish, united with Dedan, with Sheba, and with Seba—will culminate in what is known by the name of the last war of Armageddon. The eminent Faber, one of the most learned clergymen of the church of England, now gone to his rest, says that the period of this war must be soon after 1864. The author of a very able book, called "Armageddon," an elaborate discussion on prophecy, says the year, in all probability, cannot be earlier than 1869. Thomas, an eminent American writer on prophecy, says the year, in all probability, is 1911. Mr. Chamberlain says it cannot be before 1864, and it cannot be later than 1914; that is, within the next forty years: and Shimeal says it will be, in all probability, in 1868. I am not laying stress upon these dates; I do not pretend to predict; I am no prophet, and have no inspiration. I merely call your attention to the very remarkable fact which I have noticed before, that those great events, all the elements of which seem gathering and concentrating round Europe, must come to pass very shortly. No man with ordinary intelligence can look around without seeing that this land of ours will soon be girdled as with a belt of fire; that this great citadel of a free religion, of a free people, free worship in spirit and in truth, is hated

by superstition, detested by despotism; and that the decadence of the Moslem and the emergence of Palestine will form the great spring and source of that last conflict which ends the economy that now is, and brings in a better. I need not remind you that the last Russian war sprang out of Palestine. The Emperor of the French said that the Holy Sepulchre was his, and was for his monks; that is, of the Western or Romish Church. The Czar Nicholas said that it belonged to his monks, the monks of the Eastern Church. It was these two great powers coming into collision about the tomb of a dead Christ, while they were crucifying afresh and putting to an open shame the living Christ, that originated that sanguinary war that has left so many green graves in the Crimea, and so many broken hearts and dismembered homes in England. The very last unprecedented war will originate there also, and the close of it will also be there. It is most remarkable that almost all able writers upon prophecy who have really given their mind and their attention strictly to the subject concur in saying that a few years hence must be about the time, according to our ideas of prophetic chronology, when these great events shall begin. Time will show; many of you may see that day. If they are mistaken, they are mistaken because they are not inspired. No one that professes to interpret the word—the prophetic word of God—ever attempts, if he be a sane man, to prophesy; all he ventures to do is to gather the data and the elements of a conclusion, and say to you what he thinks those data substantiate and bring out, and leave time to prove whether it be so or not. It is easy to scoff at these things; but they do not part with their solemnity nor does the scoffer cease

to be responsible. At all events, whether it be near or remote, "blessed is that people whose God is the Lord; yea, blessed are the people that are in such a case."

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